

## King receives French speaker

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Sunday received Speaker of the French National Assembly Philippe Seguin, who conveyed to him the best wishes of French President Jacques Chirac. Mr. Seguin stressed the assembly's appreciation to King Hussein for his role in achieving peace in the Middle East region, saying that King Hussein has been at the forefront of the leaders who have worked for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region, and for ensuring prosperity and stability for its peoples. He expressed his country's appreciation to Jordan's democratic achievements and praised the Jordanian-French coordination in the parliamentary field. He stressed the importance of meetings between parliamentarians from both countries, saying that they contribute to enhancing bilateral relations. The meeting was attended by Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Sa'd Hayel Srouf, Jordan's Ambassador to France Sharif Fawwaz Sharaf and the French Ambassador to Jordan Bernard Bajoulet (see story on page 3).

# Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation  
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية. الراي.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

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Any information concerning the movement of its fleet to and from Amman could be obtained through Tel # 08/53200. Meanwhile, information concerning flights of other carriers could be obtained through DCA Tel # 08/52000

ROYAL JORDANIAN

Volume 21 Number 6117

AMMAN MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 1996, SHA'BAN 17, 1416

Price: Jordan 150 Fils

## King: Offer accepted with deep appreciation

# U.S. provides Jordan with F16s, upgraded M60 tanks

## Perry: U.S. strongly supports King's initiative on Iraq

By Ayman Al Safadi  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Kingdom on Sunday accepted a U.S. military assistance package that includes a squadron of F-16 fighter bombers, upgraded tanks as well as other military equipment to help modernise the Jordanian Armed Forces.

U.S. Secretary of Defence William Perry announced the package yesterday after holding talks with His Majesty King Hussein. Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and other senior officials.

Mr. Perry told reporters during a joint press conference with the King the U.S. will provide Jordan with 12 F-16A version fighter bombers and four F-16 version B aircraft in fulfillment of a promise he made to King Hussein in Washington last September.

The package also entails training, spareparts and support for the aircraft, which will be upgraded to current standards.

"The offer has been made and it has been accepted with deep appreciation," King

Hussein told reporters after meeting with Mr. Perry at Raghdan Palace.

Although the U.S. will not provide Jordan with its top of the line battle field tanks, the military package announced Sunday includes upgraded M-60 tanks which Mr. Perry described as sufficient for the Kingdom's needs.

Mr. Perry said the package will be paid for by a special draw-down funds that has already been authorised and allocations for Jordan in the U.S. foreign military assistance programme. But he would not provide details on the financial aspects of the deal.

Mr. Perry said in a meeting with a number of Jordanian journalists that Israel has offered to provide maintenance services to the aircraft. He also said the airforce bases in Jordan will have to be upgraded in order to be able to operate the F-16 fighters.

The single seat F-16A aircraft is the top war plane used by Israel. The double seat F-16B is used for training purposes.

Mr. Perry said a Jordanian airforce team will fly to the

U.S. soon to work out details of the deal.

It was not clear, however, whether the military package meets the requests for military assistance that the Kingdom has asked for in order to modernise its armed forces. The package is separate from a \$100m assistance programme to Jordan which is now before Congress.

At his joint press conference with Mr. Perry, the King said the Jordanian Armed Forces have been a force for stability in the region and have been the defender of pluralism and democracy in the Kingdom and "whatever of value to both" Jordan and the United States.

Noting that the Jordanian army has played an important role in training other militaries in the area, the King stressed that the Jordanian army will continue to be a force for peace and stability and will defend the Kingdom's achievements in peace and democracy.

He said the armed forces have been "a source of pride" for the role it played in international peacekeeping missions, saying that the

Jordanian army will not hesitate to partake these missions again if there was a need for that.

"We are committed to defending democracy, pluralism, peace, progress and stability," said the King who added that the U.S. was a long time ally of Jordan and that relations between the two countries are "as normal" as they have ever been.

The King added that the Kingdom will continue to work side by side with the U.S. to achieve a comprehensive peace "which is about to become a reality" in the Middle East.

Describing Jordan as a strong ally of the United States, Mr. Perry said the U.S. and the Jordanian defence establishment have maintained close cooperation in the past and the new package will lead to closer cooperation.

Mr. Perry, who arrived in Jordan from Saudi Arabia, described Jordan as a "linchpin for security and stability in the Middle East."

Mr. Perry praised not only the "initiative" of King Hussein in making peace with Israel, but also the "exem-



His Majesty King Hussein and U.S. Secretary of Defence William Perry Sunday address a press conference at the Royal Palace (photo by Yousef 'Allan)

plary" way in which the peace process with Israel is being implemented.

Responding to a question on Iraq, Mr. Perry said "we strongly support the initiative of King Hussein on Iraq. We are following his lead (and we will) provide support as he perceives." King Hussein's actions are intended to help the people of Iraq, he said.

King Hussein reiterated that federation among the three components of the Iraqi

society is only one of the options that the Iraqis might consider in determining the political future of their country, adding that he repeated this option after hearing it from some Iraqis.

He said Jordan's interest is in helping representatives of all segments of the Iraqi society to save their country and rehabilitate it to play its role in the region.

In Riyadh, Mr. Perry on Sunday backed Saudi Ara-

bia's acting leader Crown Prince Abdullah and said he expected stronger ties with Riyadh as Washington increased defences in the Gulf.

President Bill Clinton "believes the kingdom is in good hands under the leadership of his royal highness" Abdullah, Mr. Perry told reporters after handing him a letter wishing King Fahd a "swift recovery" from his illness.

King Fahd, 74, hospitalised for a week last month follow-

ing an undisclosed illness, handed over power temporarily to Prince Abdullah on Jan. 1. Doctors and diplomats says King Fahd suffered a blood clot on the brain.

"Together, the United States and Saudi Arabia will continue to work to further peace, stability and security not only in the Gulf, but throughout the world," Mr.

(Continued on page 3)

## Premier congratulates Egyptian counterpart

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Sunday sent a cable to the newly-appointed Egyptian Prime Minister Kamal Al Ganzouri, congratulating him on assuming his duties as premier of Egypt. Sharif Zeid wished Mr. Ganzouri and his new cabinet ministers every success in discharging their duties and said he hoped that the Joint Jordanian-Egyptian Higher Committee would meet soon to exchange views on issues of common concern and enhance bilateral relations.

## Dutch premier due Sunday

AMMAN (J.T.) — Netherlands Prime Minister Wim Kok arrives here Sunday at the head of an official Dutch delegation on a two-day visit to Jordan for talks with senior Jordanian officials, including the prime minister and the minister of foreign affairs Hans Van Mierlo and senior officials from the ministries of economic affairs and transport. Mr. Mierlo will officially open the Royal Netherlands embassy in Amman.

## Turkish jail rioters release 6 hostages

ANKARA (R) — Sunday Turkish prisoners on Milet released six of the prison officials they had taken hostages in Istanbul last week, Anadolu news agency said. The agency said rioters at Bayrampasa prison who freed the six wardens were still holding a prison director and five other wardens. Officials say efforts continue to persuade rioters to release other hostages. In the Aegean port of Izmir, inmates are still holding two prison officials.

## Ankara accuses Syria of backing rebels

ANKARA (R) — Turkish Foreign Minister Deniz Baykal accused neighbouring Syria on Sunday of backing the separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) fighting for an independent Kurdish state in southeast Turkey. "There is a clear fact. The headquarters of the PKK threat to Turkey is in Damascus," said Mr. Baykal, speaking on Turkey's Interstar TV.

# Arafat accuses Israel of killing 'martyr Ayyash'

DURA, West Bank (Agencies) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat on Sunday accused Israel of killing the bomber known as "the engineer," calling the assassination of the Hamas militant a violation of Israel-PLO peace.

"We have made the peace of the brave. We are committed to it," Mr. Arafat said in a speech. "We ask the other side not to violate this peace, to enter Palestinian territory in Gaza and kill and assassinate the struggler, the martyr, Yahya Ayyash."

Mr. Arafat's Palestinian (National) Authority, in charge of Gaza and seven towns and hundreds of villages in the West Bank, had already condemned Friday's killing of the Hamas Islamic group's bombmaker who was at top of Israel's most-wanted list.

Israel, which had blamed

Mr. Ayyash for masterminding a suicide bombing campaign that has killed nearly 80 people, has welcomed his death, apparently caused by an exploding cellular phone, but declined to confirm or deny it was responsible.

Breaking two days of silence, Mr. Arafat — caught between Islamic rivals and an Israeli peace partner that still has an economic and military stranglehold on Palestinians — pointed an accusing finger but did not threaten to slow the peace process.

"We ask them (the Israelis) to stop tampering in Palestinian territory," Mr. Arafat said.

Fearing Hamas will make good on revenge threats, Israel on Saturday clamped an indefinite closure on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, keeping thousands of Palestinians from their jobs.

It also suspended joint Israeli-Palestinian patrols in

PLO-ruled areas after Mr. Ayyash's funeral.

Initial investigations revealed Mr. Ayyash died instantly when a cellular phone packed with 50 grammes of explosives blew up. His body was found in a home in the Gaza Strip village of Beit Lahya.

PLO officials said they feared the assassination could have an impact on Palestinian general elections, only two weeks away, by persuading voters to boycott the Jan. 20 poll as Hamas has demanded.

Mr. Ayyash, 30, was known as "the engineer." Israelis blame him for a bus bombing in October 1994 that killed 22 people in Tel Aviv.

The Palestinian who hid Mr. Ayyash in Gaza for the last five months, his college roommate Usama Hamad, gave a graphic description of the blast that killed the bombmaker.

## Savir: Syria wants peace in '96

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel's chief peace negotiator with Syria said on Sunday he felt at the end of a series of talks that Syria wanted peace with Israel this year.

"We come back with the feeling we have a partner that wants to reach a peace deal in 1996, that is interested in real peace," Uri Savir told Israel radio in Washington as the Israeli delegation headed back to Israel from the United States.

Mr. Savir said, however, the sides were still a long way from agreement.

"There are still many gaps and we will need much more than one round ... in tough negotiations so that in a peace deal we can ensure our vital interests," he said.

Syria's Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaa said on Saturday President Hafez Assad wanted to restore occupied Arab lands through peace, not war.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will meet Mr. Assad in Damascus and Israeli Prime Minister

Shimon Peres in Israel later this week to discuss a future peace deal.

Mr. Christopher will propose this week the creation of a new international institution to fund joint economic projects as part of a Mideast peace agreement, Israeli army radio reported Sunday.

The radio, quoting Israeli diplomats in Washington, said Mr. Christopher would put forward his idea during a shuttle trip this week between Damascus and Jerusalem.

The reported U.S. initiative would be modelled on the donors' group created to help develop the economy of the newly autonomous Palestinian territories.

Mr. Christopher is due to attend the next meeting of the Palestinian donors' body Tuesday in Paris.

Israeli officials meanwhile drew an optimistic picture of the first two rounds of negotiations with Syria which ended Friday outside Washington.

Syria said Sunday its peace talks with Israel had made progress for the first time

since they were launched four years ago and that a peace treaty was possible.

"For the first time for four years I can say that the negotiations have allowed us to step forward onto a difficult path," Syria's chief negotiator Walid Mualllem said in remarks published by the press.

"Once the problems have been resolved, it is possible to conclude a peace treaty," Mr. Mualllem added.

Mr. Mualllem said Mr. Christopher would "evaluate the results of the discussions" at a rural retreat in Maryland with President Assad and Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

The U.S. secretary may also raise ideas for a future round of negotiations, Mr. Mualllem said, though he stressed that "the negotiators have given no commitment to resume talks."

The State Department in Washington has said Mr. Christopher will try to fix a timetable, site and agenda for another session of talks during his shuttle mission.

# Kabariti, Posovalyuk discuss situation in Iraq, peace process

AMMAN (Agencies) — Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Posovalyuk met Sunday with Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti to discuss latest developments in the peace process and the situation in Iraq as well as Jordanian-Russian relations.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting Mr. Posovalyuk said the discussions focused on a range of bilateral, regional and international questions and were very fruitful. He added that he conveyed to Mr. Kabariti Moscow's keenness to maintain consultations and coordination on regional and international political affairs.

"We discussed the peace process, noting with satisfaction the positive developments in the region, and we discussed the situation in Iraq. I reiterated Moscow's call on the Iraqi government to implement all the remaining U.N. Security Council resolutions reaffirming Russia's concern over the deterioration in the living conditions of the Iraqi people," the Russian envoy said.

Mr. Posovalyuk said he reaffirmed Russia's belief that Iraq should implement Resolution 986 which calls for the sale of Iraqi oil to

raise funds to purchase food and medicine for the Iraqi people.

In addition, the talks covered the situation in Bosnia. Moscow as well as Jordan are satisfied with the settlement of the conflict there and both sides agreed on maintaining consultations on the Balkan, the envoy said.

In reply to a question about Syrian-Israeli negotiations, Mr. Posovalyuk said that his country supports the resumption and continuation of the talks to attain further progress and hoped they would end in a final settlement.

## Saud Al Faisal to visit Tuesday

AMMAN (AFP) — Saudi Foreign Minister Saud Al Faisal is to visit Amman on Tuesday on a mission marking the final stage in a campaign to heal a rift caused by the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis which strained relations between the two countries.

"This visit will be the penultimate stage in the reconciliation between Amman and Riyadh, which should be sealed by a summit between the two countries' leaders," a senior Jordanian official said.

He said Prince Saud — the first senior Saudi official to visit Jordan since 1990 — would discuss preparations for the summit and re-establish some ties with Amman during his trip on Tuesday.

Saudi Arabia accuses Jordan of backing Iraq in its invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and by refusing to join a U.S.-led military coalition to free the emirate.

King Hussein planned to visit Saudi Arabia on Dec. 9 to meet King Fahd but the Saudi leader was taken ill, the Jordanian official said.

The two monarchs have not met since July 18, 1990, two weeks before Iraq invaded Kuwait.

## Documents ready for Asian ministerial meeting

By Ghalia Alul and Alla Toukan

Special to the Jordan Times  
AMMAN — Senior officials preparing for the 8th Asian ministerial conference Sunday approved three draft documents to be presented to the Tuesday meeting, the officials said.

The three documents included an "Amman Declaration," recommendations for economic cooperation among developing countries (ECDC) and a draft agenda for United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) which will be held in South Africa in April.

However, certain issues, which included lifting economic sanctions against Asian countries, delayed the drafting of the Amman Declaration.

Iraqi Ambassador to Jordan Noory Elwais told the Jordan Times the proposal to lift the sanctions was initially opposed by the Saudi delegation. The original proposal published in Al Ra'i daily Sunday, stated that "the ministers reiterated their deep concern for the critical economic-social situation as well as the deterioration of human conditions resulting from United Nations economic sanctions imposed on (some) targeted popula-

tions. They called on the international community to end the embargoes immediately. These economic embargoes contradict the concept of globalisation and liberalisation of economic trade, negatively affecting development."

According to an official source, this proposal passed only after it was amended to say that "ministers condemn all forms of economic embargoes unless they are backed by international and United Nations resolutions."

According to Bozorogmehr Ziaran, Iranian deputy permanent representative at the Geneva mission, other pending issues were the future role of UNCTAD, the provision of financial resources to less developed countries, free movement of people, and transfer of technology to developing countries.

Mohammad Smadi, secretary general of the Ministry of Industry and Trade and chairman of the preparatory meeting said that the conference will Tuesday assess the future role of UNCTAD, an issue which has never been tackled in previous meetings.

He added that this is the first time in the history of the Asian meetings that all draft proposals receive approval from the majority of participants.

# Deputy Ibrahim Shihdeh dies at 44

By Sa'eda Kilani  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Ibrahim Shihdeh, a member of the Lower House of Parliament, representing Balqa, died Sunday at the age of 44 after a long battle with cancer.

Mr. Shihdeh received intensive treatment at Mayo Clinic in the U.S. and several hospitals in Jordan in the past two years, but his illness aggravated, according to one relative. He was suffering from liver cancer that later developed into metastasis — cancer that spreads through the whole body.

His Majesty King Hussein deprieved his advisor, Mohammad Rasoul Kilani, to pay condolences to Mr. Shihdeh's family.

The King ordered that the late deputy's salary continue to be paid to his family, sources said.

Mr. Shihdeh left seven sons and five daughters behind. His eldest son is a medical student at a community college.

The House is expected to pay its last respects to Mr. Shihdeh on Sunday when the House convenes, House speaker, Sa'ad Hayel Srouf, said.

Mr. Shihdeh's illness prevented him from attending the House sessions last year. According to the Constitution, the Balqa seat vacated by Mr. Shihdeh's departure should be filled within two months through a by-election.

Mr. Shihdeh, who belonged to the mainstream Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) faction, Fateh, was born in a refugee camp near Jericho in 1951. He studied law at the Beirut Arab University and later received a diploma in English teaching from the Amman Training College of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). He first worked as a teacher with UNRWA and then practised law before becoming president of the Baqa'a club. He was elected as a deputy to the 80-seat House in 1993.



## Major backs deporting Saudi dissident

LONDON (R) — British Prime Minister John Major gave his backing on Sunday to the controversial expulsion of a Saudi dissident whose criticism of the Saudi royal family has endangered lucrative defence deals with Riyadh.

Mr. Major said Mohammad Masari, who is appealing against an order deporting him to the Caribbean island of Dominica, had abused British hospitality by trying to undermine a close ally whose stability was vital to the Middle East.

"Mr. Masari is an illegal immigrant who has used his hospitality in this country to wage a campaign to try to bring down the Saudi Ara-

bian regime," Mr. Major told BBC television.

"Saudi Arabia is critical to the stability of the Gulf. That is very important not just to this country, but to the world. We have already had one Gulf war," he said on the breakfast with frost programme.

Mr. Masari, 49, has waged a relentless campaign against Saudi Arabia since arriving in Britain through Yemen last year.

He has accused the Saudi royal family of corruption and called for a peaceful transition to Islamic rule.

Mr. Major said Britain had a long and honourable tradition of helping asylum seekers. But he said the government could not "tolerant-

ly look to one side" if they sought to "create unsettled relationships with our allies."

Some opposition Labour Party politicians and newspapers have criticised the government for caving in to pressure from arms firms and blatantly putting Britain's commercial interests before its belief in free speech.

Defence company Vickers, which acknowledged this week that it had warned the British government of the threat posed to its contracts by Saudi anger over Mr. Masari's activities.

Vickers is bidding for a tank contract with Riyadh as part of the multi-billion pound Al Yamamah deal signed in the mid-1980s.

The government has acknowledged the difficulty of striking a balance in the Masari affair, but Home Secretary Michael Howard, Britain's interior minister, on Sunday reiterated his belief that the decision to deport him was correct.

"Our government exists to advance and protect the interests of the people of the United Kingdom... and that includes the jobs of the people of the United Kingdom. That is an entirely legitimate consideration for us to take into account," he told BBC radio.

In Riyadh the Saudi government threatened to strip Mr. Masari of his nationality.

"If a Saudi opposes his country and his religion, he will be denied citizenship," Defence Minister Prince Sultan Ibn Abdul Aziz told reporters at a passing-out ceremony for air force pilots.

The British government on Wednesday gave Mr. Masari 10 days to appeal a deportation order, which it acknowledged was issued under pressure from Riyadh and from British defence firms fearful of losing their Saudi contracts.

Another Islamic fundamentalist opponent, Usama bin Laden, was stripped of his Saudi nationality in 1993 for allegedly financing Arab militant groups.

## Bahrain may face fresh violence — diplomats

NICOSIA (R) — Fresh disturbances in Bahrain after a government crackdown on Muslim Shi'ite unrest show the Gulf's financial centre may be in for more violence, diplomats in the island state said on Sunday.

The ruling Al Khalifa family, followers of the Sunni branch of Islam, last year crushed five months of protests by Shi'ite opponents demanding the release of political prisoners and the restoration of a parliament dissolved in 1975.

Bahraini dissidents said over the weekend riot police were back in action on Friday in a new government crackdown.

Teargas, rubber bullets and glass-particle cluster bullets were fired at worshippers attempting to enter a mosque five kilometres from the centre of the capital Manama, a statement sent to international news organisations by the London-based Bahraini Freedom Movement said.

"It's a turning point and the toughest in the govern-

ment's fight against its opponents. We have seen action before, but it was not at that level — attacking worshippers near mosques," one diplomat in Manama said on Sunday.

"It's a tough struggle by a powerless Shi'ite opposition in Bahrain," another diplomat said. "It's going to be a long and maybe violent campaign."

"Frankly, the opposition are confined to poor Shi'ite villages and they are not well organised. I do not expect the government to easily allow them to achieve their goals."

Anti-government protests erupted in December 1994 after a young Shi'ite cleric, Sheikh Ali Salman, distributed a leaflet signed by nearly 20,000 people calling for restoration of the elected assembly.

At least 13 civilians and three policemen were killed and hundreds of people were arrested before the disturbances were quelled in April.

Sheikh Ali was deported together with three other Shi'ite clerics accused of

fanning the unrest and, like many other Gulf Arab exiles, they settled in London. Two out of three among Bahrain's indigenous population of a little more than 500,000 belong to the Shi'ite branch of Islam.

The government accuses foreign groups of backing the unrest and specifically blames non-Arab Iran, where many Bahraini Shi'ite clerics study at the holy city of Qom.

Bahrain's Emir Sheikh Isa Ibn Sulman Al Khalifa, in his toughest national day speech since coming to power in 1961, last month vowed to maintain a firm line on unrest.

Diplomats said the protests had failed seriously to affect normal life and business in Bahrain, the Gulf's major business centre with about 120 banks and financial institutions.

But they had caused concern among the approximately 200,000 expatriates in Bahrain and raised questions about the durability of the Al Khalifa family, which has ruled the island since the 18th century.

## Burnt walls mark Kuwait prison riot

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait central prison, its walls charred and holed by bullets after troops put down a riot by inmates, opened its doors to reporters for the first time on Sunday.

Officials said Friday's pre-dawn riot by hundreds of inmates in the single-storey building was started by a handful of inmates demanding inclusion in an annual pardon.

Hundreds of rioters armed with metal pipes, rods and sharp objects quickly joined in, burning down the prison hospital, school, library and other facilities in what officials said was the worst act of unrest by the inmates of the facility, which has been criticised for overcrowding.

Interior ministry special forces restored order at 3.30 a.m. on Friday, more than three hours after the riot erupted.

"Officers had the right to shoot, at the legs but they did not. They fired bullets in the air," said Brigadier Abdul Karim Kurabit, head of the interior ministry's Implementation of Judicial Sentences Department.

Two prisoners were slightly wounded. No prisoner escaped.

Brig. Kurabit told a news conference the instigators were inmates serving long sentences for drug offences who wanted to be included in an annual pardon due in late February.

About 600 inmates — almost half the prison's 1,400 population — eventually joined in. Five inmates suspected of provoking the violence were being interrogated.

The Emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, issued a pardon on or around Kuwait's Feb. 25 national day. The pardons does not cover murderers, rapists and drug dealers.

Residents said they suspected the ministry had opened the prison to reporters to counter what some judged to be sensationalised accounts of the riot in some local newspapers.

The acrid stench of teargas and of blackened walls and doors filled the building in the Suleibiya district. Workers painted blackened walls and removing damaged equipment.

Bullet holes spattered the ceiling of one corridor. A couple of cartridge casings lay on the floor. One official said some of the freshly plastered holes were not caused by bullets, merely by someone "hammering something."

Reporters were not allowed to meet any prisoners. A group of inmates from the Indian subcontinent, their heads shaved in line with jail rules, looked on bemused as reporters went past.

Inmates include dozens of Palestinians and Jordanians convicted of collaborating with Iraq's 1990-91 occupation.

Brig. Kurabit said International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) officials visited the prison on Saturday.

The U.S. State Department's 1994 human rights report for Kuwait said prison conditions did not meet internationally recognised minimum standards and cells were severely overcrowded.

## Poll: Minority of settlers to live under Palestinian rule

NABLUS, West Bank (AFP) — Nearly 40 per cent of Jewish settlers on the West Bank believe Israel's peace agreements with the Palestinians will lead to the creation of a Palestinian state within 10 years, according to a poll published Sunday.

Only 16 per cent of the settlers, polled for the first time on their views of the peace process, would consider staying on in their homes under Palestinian rule, with 71 per cent saying this would be out of the question.

In the survey, carried out by the Israeli polling group Modiin Ezrachi for the Nablus-based Centre for Palestine Research and Studies, 18.4 per cent of those queried were confident the process of granting autonomy to Palestinians would not lead to the creation of a Palestinian state.

But 38.7 per cent think the West Bank will fall under full Palestinian rule within five to 10 years. Another 26 per cent think the peace process will fail and Israel will reoccupy all Palestinian territories.

A minority of 22 per cent believe the peace process will lead to the dismantling of the some 120 Jewish settlements on the West Bank within five to 10 years, while 30 per cent said they would be willing to leave their settlements if paid compensation.

Earlier Major Ahmad



WEST BANK-GAZA CLOSURE: An Israeli policeman Sunday watches an elderly Palestinian man, who was not allowed to enter the Israeli-occupied City of Jerusalem from the West Bank, as he steps out of a minibus at the army checkpoint on the road from Bethlehem to Jerusalem. Fearing revenge attacks in the wake of the killing of master Hamas bombmaker Yahya Ayyash, Israel clamped an indefinite closure on the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Reuters photo)

## UAE population reaches 2.37 million

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The population of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) stood at around 2.37 million at the end of 1995, according to the first census in 10 years, the official news agency WAM reported on Sunday.

The figure includes 1.579 million males, while the two main oil-producing emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai accounted for around 67 per cent of the total, WAM said, quoting figures by the planning ministry which conducted the month-long census.

Abu Dhabi's population stood at 928,360 and that of Dubai at around 674,100. The rest covered the remaining five emirates — Sharjah, Ras Al Khaimah, Ajman, Fujairah and Umm Al Qu-

wain. The census, which was carried out in December, was the first since 1985, when the population was put at around 1.5 million.

The UAE, which was created from the merger of the seven Gulf sheikhdoms in 1971, has an area of 80,000 square kilometres. It produces around 2.16 million barrels per day (bpd) of oil and its crude reserves of 98 billion barrels account for nearly 10 per cent of the world total.

Its vast oil wealth and relatively small population have enabled it to have one of the highest per capita incomes in the world, standing at nearly \$17,000 in 1994 and an estimated \$15,700 in 1995.

WAM gave no breakdown of nationalities but foreign expatriates are independent estimated at around two-thirds of the total population.

They started to stream after oil was discovered three decades ago and turned the desert oasis into a wealthy modern country. Sunday's figure is slightly lower than earlier projections by the planning ministry, which put the population at 2.4 million at the end of 1994. The figure was estimated at 2.23 million in 1994 and 2.1 million in 1993.

Expatriates from Asian countries — India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Lanka and the Philippines — form nearly half of the UAE's population.

## Cyprus' 'island of love' image takes a bashing

NICOSIA (R) — Cyprus' image as a holiday "island of love," already tarnished by a spate of unsolved gangland murders and bombings, was savaged again this weekend when the president accused his own police force of carrying out murders.

Incidents of masked gunmen toting Kalashnikovs and ambushing owners of seedy cabarets or gambling clubs in broad daylight were strangely never witnessed by anyone last year.

But by the end of 1995 it was becoming common to hear of bombs going off outside shops, brothels or under cars.

"Public opinion was wondering... how killings, arsons and explosions can be committed with such ease and the police are unable to solve them," President Glafos Clerides said in a letter to the assistant police chief who resigned last week.

"My concerns had increased after unquestionably reliable information that murders had been committed by police officers, who in one case visited a senior officer at his home at 2.00 in the morning and told him of the mur-

der they had committed. The officer told them 'I know everything, be careful,'" he added.

Mr. Clerides also accused the police of having links to organised crime.

No action has not been taken against any member of the police force.

Assistant police chief Costas Papacostas resigned last Thursday and Cypriot media reported that his boss Andreas Potamitis would also quit. "for health reasons."

A government official, who asked not to be named, said five to six members of the force are suspected of at least one murder and one murder attempt last year.

"I don't want to believe it," said Stelios Ioannou, chairman of the police union, when asked about the president's accusations which were made public this weekend.

"But if it is true they must be punished," Mr. Ioannou added.

"Who is going to arrest them? It is police that are involved. Who is going to carry out the investigation?" said government spokesman

Yiannakis Cassoulides. Crime on the Mediterranean island, which largely depends on tourism, is low by international standards but the brazen nature of recent murders has shocked a public used to not having to lock their front doors or cars.

But of the 11 murders and manslaughters committed last year, only three, said to be crimes of passion, were solved. The remaining eight, believed to be connected to organised crime of gangs vying for control of prostitution and drug trafficking rings, have not been cracked.

The image of the police force was also severely tarnished when an independent board of inquiry revealed that police torture of suspects in custody was rife at the central police station in the port town of Limassol. It described the methods as "reminiscent of the inquisition."

In December the island's attorney-general ordered the release of a Turkish Cypriot charged with drugs trafficking after allegations of police brutality during his detention.

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

### JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

**PROGRAMME TWO**  
14:00 Cartoon Movie: "A Boy Named Charlie Brown"  
15:30 Family Christmas Movie: "Ernest Saves Christmas"  
17:00 Children's programme — "C'est Pas Sorcier"  
17:30 Series — Des Heros Ordinaires  
19:00 News in French  
19:15 Magazine — Nimbus  
19:30 News Headlines  
19:35 Home Improvement  
20:00 Inventions  
20:25 The Bold and the Beautiful  
21:10 Star Trek  
22:00 News in English  
22:25 "The Man in Santa Claus"  
23:50 The Four Seasons

### PRAYER TIMES

05:06 Fair  
06:28 (Sunrise) Dhuhr  
11:35 Dhuhr  
14:19 'Asr  
16:42 Maghrib  
18:05 Isha

### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church  
Swedeh. Tel. 810741

Assemblies of God Church. Tel. 632785.  
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.  
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.  
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.  
Terresanta Church Tel. 622366.  
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 625541.  
Anglican Church Tel. 652826.  
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.  
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.  
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.  
Armenian International Church Tel. 652526.  
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328.  
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 645457.  
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.  
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.  
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295.

### WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be cold at night. Rise in temperatures is expected. It will be partly cloudy in Aqaba and sea calm.

Min./Max. temp  
Amman 5/15  
Aqaba 8/22  
Deserts 4/16

### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

#### NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:  
Dr. Ghaleb Zawaideh 734011  
Dr. Fakher Belbechi 663412  
Dr. Khalil Al Tuleq 757253  
Dr. Osama Al Hussini 847289  
Firas pharmacy 661912  
Ferdows pharmacy 778336  
Al Asma pharmacy 637855  
Nasrouh pharmacy 625672  
Yacoub pharmacy 630750  
Shmehani pharmacy 637664  
Nasrouh pharmacy 626372  
Najih pharmacy 847632

IRBID:  
Dr. Ahmad Qanu 281484  
Alquds pharmacy 637111

ZARQA:  
Dr. Amin Abul Rah 983393  
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

Jordan Valley 9/23

Yesterday's high temperatures:  
Amman 14, Aqaba 22 Humidity readings: Amman 33 per cent, Aqaba 34 per cent.

### EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111  
Civil Defence Department 661111  
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341  
Civil Defence Emergency 199  
Fire Brigade 192, 621111, 637777  
Blood Bank 617101  
Highway Police 643402  
Traffic Police 656590  
Public Security Department 630321  
Hotel Complaints 605800  
Police Complaints 661176  
Water and Sewerage

Complaints 897467  
Amman Municipality 787111  
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121  
Overseas Calls 010230  
Central Amman Telephone

Repairs 623101  
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101  
Jordan Television 775111  
Radio Jordan 774111  
Water Authority 680100  
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636381  
RJ Flight Information 08-53200  
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

### HOSPITALS

AMMAN:  
Hossein Medical Centre 813813/332  
Khalidi Maternity, J. Ann 644381/6  
Akileh Maternity, J. Ann. 64441/2  
Jabal Amman Maternity 64362  
Malhas, J. Amman 636140  
Palestine, Shmehani 607071  
Shmehani Hospital 669131  
University Hospital 845845  
Al-Muasher Hospital 6672779  
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/37  
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6  
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3  
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26  
Army, Marka 891611/15  
Queen Alia Hospital 602340/50  
Amal Hospital 674155  
The Arab Center for Heart and Special Surgery 645199

ZARQA:  
Zarqa Govt. Hospital 09983323  
Zarqa National Hospital 09983323  
Ibn Sina Hospital 0998732  
Al-Hikma Modern Hospital 0998990

IRBID:  
Princess Basma Hospital 00275555  
Greek Catholic Hospital 00272575  
Ibn Al-Nafis Hospital 00274700  
AQABA:  
Princess Haya Hospital 03131111

### FOR THE TRAVELLER

#### QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)3274-5, where it should always be verified.

#### ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

07:20 Sana (RJ)  
08:35 Jeddah (RJ)  
09:00 Damascus (RJ)  
09:30 New Delhi (RJ)  
09:55 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)  
10:05 Beirut (RJ)  
16:20 Cairo (RJ)  
18:40 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)  
19:00 Bangkok (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)  
04:00 Rome (AZ)  
09:45 Khartoum (SD)  
09:50 Cairo (MS)  
12:40 Moscow, Abu Dhabi (UAE)

### HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 every Mon  
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Mon  
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sat  
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sat

#### MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fill per

Apple 700  
Banana 250  
Banana (Mukammal) 800  
Cabbage 100  
Carrot 200  
Cauliflower 110  
Cucumbers (large) 200  
Cucumbers (small) 250  
Eggplant 350  
Garlic 750  
Grapefruit 220  
Lemon 120  
Marrow (large) 250  
Marrow (small) 250  
Onion (green) 220  
Onion (dry) 250  
Orange 250  
Pepper (hot) 260  
Pepper (sweet) 250  
Potato 260  
Radish 150  
Spinach 250  
Spring Beans 270  
Tangerine 250  
Tomato 170





**PRINCE ABDULLAH RECEIVES SPANISH MEDAL:** Spanish Charge D' affaires in Jordan Gustavo de Aristegui Saturday presents his Royal Highness Prince Abdullah with The Great Cross of Naval Military Merit. The medal, which was awarded to Prince Abdullah by King Juan Carlos upon the recommendation of the Spanish embassy in Amman, is the highest and the oldest Spanish military medal in times of peace. The medal was awarded to Prince Abdullah in appreciation of his role in promoting Jordanian-Spanish relations (Petra photo)

## RJ to open office in Tel Aviv

**TEL AVIV (R)** — Royal Jordanian (RJ) will open an office in Tel Aviv within a month in preparation for the start of flights between Jordan and Israel.

RJ said it had chosen Galilee Tours, the first agency to bring Israeli tourists to Egypt and Jordan, as its representative in

Israel.

Once the two countries complete a transport agreement there will be five weekly flights by each side between Tel Aviv and Amman, said Moshe Hananel, managing director of Galilee Tours.

The transportation agreement, expected to be signed

in the coming weeks, is within the framework of the peace accord signed between Jordan and Israel in October 1994.

The flights will last only 14 minutes, compared with the several hours it takes to cross the border by land.

## Afro-Arab parliamentary conference opens today

**By Sa'eda Kilani**  
*Special to the Jordan Times*

**AMMAN** — His Majesty King Hussein will today, Monday, open the seventh Afro-Arab Parliamentary Dialogue conference with the aim of coordinating Arab and African stands on issues of mutual interest.

The three-day conference, which will be attended by parliament speakers and deputies from 33 countries, is expected to tackle the Yemen-Eritrean conflict over Red Sea islands, said Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Sa'd Hayel Srour.

Arab parliamentarians will hold a special session on Thursday after the conclusion of the conference's meetings to discuss the U.S.

Congress decision to move the American embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

"It is difficult at present to draw expectations of the outcome of the conference...but in general the issues at stake are not disputable" among the participating countries, said Mr. Srour.

Following the U.S. Congress decision to transfer the embassy to Jerusalem, the Arab Parliamentary Union called for an urgent meeting to discuss the move.

Over three days, participants at the Afro-Arab conference will be discussing proposals to activate Afro-Arab dialogue as well as the amendment and endorsement of the conference's bylaws. The conference will be mainly tackling conflicts in Africa and the Arab World and is expected to put the appropriate mechanism that will help in solving ongoing disputes. One of the proposals on the agenda is to launch Afro-Arab cooperation to make the two regions free of nuclear and mass destruction weapons.

Participants will also discuss the impact of the application of the General Agreement of Trade and Tariffs (GATT) on African and Arab countries' economies.

Mr. Srour said, Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Qatar and Bahrain will be among Arab countries participating in the conference.

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Mr. Srour said, Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Qatar and Bahrain will be among Arab countries participating in the conference.

## U.S. provides Jordan with F16s

(Continued from page 1)

Perry said in prepared remarks before leaving for Jordan.

He said their "fruitful" talks "can only lead to a deeper understanding of our joint interests and stronger relations between our two countries."

Mr. Perry said he and Saudi Defence Minister Prince Sultan reviewed how much defences had been improved since last March.

He said joint military exercises and the deployment of prepositioned equipment in the region "both deter the immediate threats posed by Iran and Iraq and give us the ability to act decisively in the future if crises develop."

The United States last year deployed enough military equipment in Qatar to support an army brigade and since August has stationed 13 ships in the Gulf carrying tanks and other military equipment.

Washington has also deployed a brigade's worth of military equipment in Kuwait.

Mr. Perry also spoke with U.S. military personnel enforcing a no-fly zone over southern Iraq and met with those taking part in a U.S. Army programme to train the Saudi Arabian National Guard, which is headed by Crown Prince Abdullah.

A Nov. 13 car bomb at the programme building killed five Americans and two Indians, but Mr. Perry vowed:

"We will not be deterred from this task by terrorism."

The United States has put up a \$2 million reward to find the bombers. The attack has been claimed by three little-known organisations demanding the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Saudi territory.

Since Mr. Perry left Washington on Tuesday, he has also visited NATO troops enforcing the peace accord for Bosnia, held talks on de-nuclearisation in Ukraine and discussed Middle East security accords.

His tour has also taken him to Italy and Hungary.

Mr. Perry visited Muscat on Saturday, when he discussed with Sultan Qaboos how to bolster Oman's armed forces as part of U.S. efforts to thwart potential threats from Iraq and Iran.

It was Mr. Perry's first trip to Oman, which is a member of the GCC along with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. He will wind up his tour in Israel.

Calling the Gulf region a "vital national security interest," Mr. Perry said Sunday the United States will continue its close military watch over Iraq to deter another Gulf war.

"It's always better to deter war than have to fight one," Mr. Perry said. "And that's our objective here."

Mr. Perry visited the air base in Riyadh, from which U.S. warplanes fly up to 125 sorties a day over southern

Iraq.

Air Force Major General Carl Franklin, commander of a joint military task force in the region, said Iraqi President Saddam Hussein remains a danger despite his defeat in the 1990-91 Gulf war.

"We see Saddam as a threat today, and we see that threat for the foreseeable future," Gen. Franklin told reporters travelling with Mr. Perry.

The U.S. warplanes that patrol the skies over southern Iraq seek out potential targets, such as anti-aircraft missile batteries, that would be among the first to be attacked in wartime.

Details of the missions over Iraq provided by senior military officers indicate that what has been billed as a "deny flight" mission in southern Iraq is more closely geared towards attacking ground targets in the event of an Iraqi invasion.

In addition to patrolling the skies for Iraqi warplanes, U.S. air force and navy jets also lock onto Iraqi targets in what amount to dry runs for war.

"Our pilots, our air crew fly against targets they would be expected to pursue in our contingency plans," said Gen. Franklin. "We do so with the intent of having our force visible to the Iraqi regime so that there is no doubt in their minds as to our resolve."

## Seguin says France supports 'genuine' Jordanian partnership with Europe

**AMMAN (J.T.)** — President of the French National Assembly Philippe Seguin Sunday met with the speakers of the Senate and the Lower House of Parliament and told his hosts that his country supports the emergence of a genuine Jordanian-European partnership for the benefit of the two parties and the cause of peace in the Middle East.

Mr. Seguin, who is currently on a tour of the Middle East region, reviewed with Senate Speaker Ahmad Lawzi and House Speaker Sa'd Hayel Srour areas for potential cooperation between France and Jordan as well as between Europe and the Arab World, calling for the initiation of intensive dialogue between European and Arab parliaments to advance bilateral relations.

On France's role, Mr. Seguin said his country feels it is eligible to act as a bridge between Europe and the Arab World, adding that Paris will spare no effort towards laying the foundations of a new Middle East-European partnership based on mutual respect and mutual benefits.

With reference to peace, Mr. Seguin said Jordan is

facing a major turning point in its history by opting for peace following prolonged periods of armed conflict.

He said that France hopes to further enhance relations with Jordan which has chosen the path of democracy and which represents a moderate Islamic nation, adding that his country deeply respects different faiths, especially Islam, which is the second largest religion practiced in France.

Lauding the endeavours of His Majesty King Hussein in the peace efforts and on the domestic front, Mr. Seguin said that he hoped King Hussein, who is following in the footsteps of the late King Abdullah the founder of the Kingdom, will continue to lead Jordan towards further progress.

He also expressed hope that Jordanian and French parliaments will maintain their cooperation in parliamentary fields.

The speakers of the Senate and the Lower House discussed parliamentary cooperation and voiced Jordan's appreciation of France's support for the Arab causes and its role in settling the crisis in the former Yugoslavia.



**President of the French National Assembly Philippe Seguin Sunday meets with Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Sa'd Hayel Srour and members of the House (Petra photo)**

mer Yugoslavia.

Mr. Srour welcomed France's proposal for the creation of a neutral international commission to conduct investigations into the sufferings of the Iraqi people as a result of the U.N. sanctions on Baghdad.

Both Mr. Lawzi and Mr. Srour thanked France for its continued assistance to Jordan in its endeavours to carry out development plans expressing hope for continued cooperation in all fields.

Mr. Seguin who extended

an invitation to Mr. Srour for a Jordanian parliamentary delegation to visit Paris ended his visit to the Kingdom later Sunday.

His tour in the region includes Lebanon, Israel, Syria and the Palestinian self rule areas.

## New tunnel to be built in Jabal Amman

**By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter**

**AMMAN** — As of early March the Amman Municipality will start digging a 65-metre-long tunnel under the Fifth Circle interchange in Jabal Amman in an effort to reduce traffic congestion in that area.

A municipality official told the Jordan Times Sunday that tender documents are ready and the municipality will invite contractors next week to submit bids for the estimated JD 600,000 project.

The planned two-lane tunnel is expected to facilitate traffic, especially for vehicles heading to and from Wadi Sagra and Abdoum District, said the official. He also said that the municipality has allocated the necessary funds for the project in addition to JD 100,000 to cover the cost of installation of infrastructure services in that area such as electricity, sewerage, water and telephone networks.

He said that these re-installations are expected to begin before the end of the month, by which time, he added, the municipality will have completed a detour plan to be followed while work is under way on the tunnel.

The municipality has constructed five other tunnels (both vehicle and pedestrian) in the Greater Amman area.

More than a week ago the municipality started digging a 34-metre-long tunnel in an eastern Amman district. The area was considered dangerous for pedestrians and several school children were reported to have been killed or injured in road accidents there.

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## Jordan to attend Cairo meeting on refugees

**AMMAN (J.T.)** — At a five-day meeting in Cairo to discuss questions related to the Palestinian people and the services provided to Palestinian refugees by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), Jordan's Director of the Palestinian Affairs Department (DPA) Ibrahim Tarshih will participate in a discussion of the implementation of resolutions and recommendations of an earlier meeting on Palestinian education.

The meeting, which started Sunday, will tackle the issue of Israel's practices in the occupied Arab territories, its settlement policies, the economic situation in the occupied lands and the status of Jerusalem, according to a DPA statement released Sunday.

At the meeting on the Palestinian educational system, held last October, Jordan had urged the Arab League to increase the number of technical and educational cadres in order to help improve the standard of education at schools run by UNRWA in its fields of operations, especially in the Palestinian territories.

Jordan has consistently cooperated with Palestinian educational authorities to try to correct the damage suffered by the Palestinian educational system under Israeli occupation, the statement said.

According to the statement the delegates, representing Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine and the Arab League, will review a report on UNRWA's services as submitted by the agency's commissioner general, Iler Turkmen to the UN General Assembly last September.

UNRWA's fiscal budget for 1996 has been estimated at \$666 million, of which at least \$168 million will be allocated for the agency's operations and services in Jordan.

The Jordanian delegation will submit to the current meeting a set of reports and studies prepared by the government concerning UNRWA's services and the status of Jerusalem, added the statement.

It said that the outcome of the meeting will be submitted later to the Arab League Council Meetings.

Mr. Tarshih is heading the Jordanian delegation to the Cairo meetings.

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## 'Islamist Revivalists' suspects testify in trial

**By Rana Hussein**  
*Special to the Jordan Times*

**AMMAN** — Six people known as the "Islamic Revivalists" and accused of sabotage Sunday testified in their own case at the State Security Court.

The six defendants, who pleaded not guilty, are charged with planning to carry out attacks against foreigners in Jordan using explosives and automatic weapons, illegal possession and manufacturing of explosive materials, automatic weapons for illegal use, and belonging to an illegal organisation.

The first defendant, Saber Mokbel, told the court that he was innocent of all charges against him and that he was only an Islamic preacher.

He said that he purchased arms when the 1990 Gulf War broke out because "His Majesty King Hussein called on all people to carry weapons to defend themselves."

"We were responding to the King's call to defend our country," Sheikh Saber said.

He stressed that he had no stand on the peace treaty with Israel because "everything ended when the Gulf War ended."

He said that the explosives were delivered to him by a man called Khalid Anani, known as "Abu Al Abed," to keep for several

days. Sheikh Saber said he gave the explosives to Khalid Rahal (the fourth defendant) who was supposed to get rid of them.

He denied all the confessions attributed to him and said they were obtained under duress.

On Dec. 17, the State Prosecutor General presented explosive materials that he said the defendant had hidden in a cave close to the fifth defendant's (Khalid Kilani) house as evidence against the six defendants.

According to the police register, the explosives include 50 grammes of TNT and C4 explosive materials, one hand-grenade, an automatic timer, batteries, electric wires and a red bag.

Nasser Ahmad Mallaha, the second defendant did not deny that he belonged to an illegal organisation (Islamic Revivalists), but said he was innocent of the charge of illegal possession and manufacturing of explosive materials and automatic weapons for illegal use.

Na'eem Yousef Tilawi, the third defendant, denied that he was involved in the case in any way.

Khalid Rahal, the fourth defendant, spoke of his role in taking the bag of explosives from Sheikh Saber and giving it to the fifth defendant, Khalid Kilani.

The fourth defendant also

told the court that he was questioned under duress.

Khalid Kilani, the fifth defendant, who led authorities to the cave near his house where he allegedly buried the explosives, also said he was interrogated under duress.

Captain Ahmad Faris Kurdi of the Irbid Police Department had testified in an earlier session that he found the explosives buried in a cave only two metres away from the home of Khalid Kilani.

The sixth defendant, Khalid Mohammad Udwan, 33, told the court that he had left the country in 1980 and returned only once in 1986 then left the country again, and returned permanently in 1993.

He also claimed that he was interrogated under pressure.

At the end of the three-hour session, defence attorneys Radi Gharaibeh and Khalid Aref, representing the first and fifth defendants, asked the court to allow them time to call four defence witnesses, including an explosive expert.

Presiding Judge Hafez Amin denied a request by defence attorney Gharaibeh to inspect the cave where the explosives were found and set Jan. 14 as a new date to continue hearing the case.

## Ministry offers local councils JD 6m in loans

**AMMAN (Petra)** — Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Nader Dheirat Sunday said the ministry had granted JD 6,368,500 worth of loans last year to local councils throughout the Kingdom. The loans were used to carry out various projects, including construction of roads, boundary walls, and buildings, in addition to buying certain equipment needed to carry out services by the joint services councils.

The Jordanian delegation will submit to the current meeting a set of reports and studies prepared by the government concerning UNRWA's services and the status of Jerusalem, added the statement.

It said that the outcome of the meeting will be submitted later to the Arab League Council Meetings.

Mr. Tarshih is heading the Jordanian delegation to the Cairo meetings.

## Trade team to visit U.S.

**AMMAN (Petra)** — A Jordanian investment delegation will leave for the United States at the end of February to hold talks with American businessmen on bilateral cooperation. The delegation's visit aims to highlight the important role the private sector can play in strengthening Jordanian-US cooperation. The visit is being organised by the Washington-based Arab-American Chamber of Commerce.

## CONDOLENCES

The editor and staff of the Jordan Times mourn the death on Sunday of

**Dr. Hanna Habib Qayyaleh**

the grandfather of their friend and colleague Vera Azar

May his soul rest in peace.



## Hutu rebels prepared to accept U.N. peacekeepers in Burundi

NAIROBI (AFP) — Burundi's Hutu rebels said Saturday they are prepared to accept an international peacekeeping force in the country to end ethnic violence which has left tens of thousands of people dead.

In a statement, the National Council for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD), the political wing of the Forces for the Defence of Democracy (FDD), gave the proposal a cautious welcome.

"An international force would be opportune, under the sole condition that it is in Burundi and acts as an intervention force between the warring sides," the council said.

The statement, issued from Belgium, was received in Nairobi as the U.N. Security Council, meeting in New York Friday, failed to back U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali's proposal for stand-by troops to be based in neighbouring Zaire to avert an ethnic bloodbath.

It condemned "daily killings, massacres, tortures

and arbitrary detention" in Burundi, but simply took note of Mr. Ghali's report, which would be discussed next week.

The Burundian government, an uneasy coalition between the majority Hutu and minority Tutsi communities, called Friday for U.N. assistance in internal security and humanitarian aid.

But it has rejected the proposal for standby troops, which is also firmly opposed by the Tutsi-dominated army.

Continuing ethnic clashes in Burundi, which date back to a bloody coup attempt in 1993 in which Hutu President Melchior Ndadaye was assassinated, have left 100,000 dead, the United Nations has said.

The CNDD said any U.N. force should "help create a new army from the fusion of the two forces, the FDD and the non-putschist elements of the government army."

If that does not happen, the CNDD will reject Mr. Ghali's proposal, the state-

ment said, adding that it failed to understand why the force would be stationed in Zaire "when the problem is in Burundi."

The CNDD is opposed to the government and has accused the army of wanting to pursue the failed coup.

Its statement said proposals for a U.N. force in 1993 and 1994 failed to gain ground, but now the world realised the FDD was "a new and unbeatable military force."

It said the CNDD should be consulted before any international force is sent to the region.

The U.N. Security Council has been cool on the idea of sending troops because of the complex ethnic situation and difficulty in assembling an international force amid reservations in the region.

There are also fears that troops on the border with Burundi might actually provoke further tensions inside the country.

The FDD is also suspected of collaborating with Rwandan Hutu extremists

in refugee camps in Tanzania and Zaire who are blamed for bloody ethnic violence in Rwanda in 1994, in which more than 500,000 people died.

In a non-binding statement, the Security Council urged travel restrictions be imposed against extremists from among the Hutu and Tutsi communities held responsible for inter-ethnic killings.

"It condemns in the strongest terms those persons responsible for such actions, which must cease immediately. It encourages again all states to take the measures deemed necessary to prevent such persons from travelling abroad and receiving any kind of support," it added.

Western diplomats said the idea of standby troops looked a non-starter, but a parallel proposal — that relief workers be given armed protection — would be examined in more detail next week.

## ANC calls on Inkatha to return to assembly

CARLETONVILLE, South Africa (R) — President Nelson Mandela Sunday urged the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) to return to the assembly writing south Africa's new constitution, an issue which has severely divided the nation since the demise of apartheid.

We would like to reiterate our call to the Inkatha Freedom Party to return to the constitutional assembly unconditionally.

Mr. Mandela in the annual policy statement released at a rally celebrating his ruling African National Congress (ANC)'s 84th birthday.

Inkatha, seeking self-determination in its stronghold of KwaZulu-Natal province and demanding international mediation on its major differences with the ANC, has boycotted most of the constitution writing process.

Assembly leaders acknowledge privately that a constitution adopted without the Zulu-based party led by chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi

would be hard to enforce and that if Mr. Buthelezi returns to the negotiations, much of the work already done might have to be reviewed.

But Mr. Mandela said: "We must emphasise the point that the NCA is a democratically elected body, mandated by the people to draft and adopt a new constitution."

Inkatha could not be reached for comment. But the party had vowed it will not return to the assembly until its demands for international mediation have been met. It has often said it would not recognise the final constitution if it was adopted without its input.

Inkatha and the ANC have been bitter rivals both before and after the April 1994 elections which brought the black majority to power in south Africa for the first time.

Thousands of their supporters have been killed in years of factional fighting, most of them in the Inkatha stronghold of KwaZulu-Natal.

The first working draft of the final constitution was released in November but analysts said it served more to isolate problems than to identify answers.

The draft leaves the tussle between centralists and federalists unresolved and offers few hints on equally divisive issues such as the standing of the 11 officially recognised languages, the role of tribal chiefs and elders, the seat of parliament and the national anthem.

Those issues on which a consensus has been forged since white rule ended do not have the sanction of Zulu leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi's IFP, which had been boycotting the constitution-writing process since February 1995.

Under an interim constitution setting ground rules for South Africa's transition to full democracy, the assembly has until May 10, the second anniversary of Mr. Mandela's inauguration, to complete its work.

## Italy wants EU unity through consensus — Agnelli

MILAN, Italy (AFP) — Italy will push for greater European integration through consensus on key issues during its six-month presidency of the European Union, Foreign Minister Susanna Agnelli said in an interview Saturday.

She told the Milan daily Corriere della Sera that the EU's structures faced immense upheaval as it expanded, at a time when its 15 current member nations have been arguing over monetary union and majority voting.

"On all these issues, there are different points of views and interests, but it seems to me that, in the vast majority of countries, the desire for Europe remains strong," she said.

"That is the central point which will force U.S. towards compromise... That is where the importance of our presidency, and those that follow, lies," she said.

Ms. Agnelli also said she thought the resignation Friday of Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, who was criticised in Russia for being too pro-Western, did not mean Moscow would revert to anti-Western policies.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin "has promised continuity," she said.

"Above all, I think the interests linking Russia and the west, which are not merely economic interests, will positively influence Moscow's foreign policy," she added.

Ms. Agnelli said Italy would "intensify dialogue" with Moscow "to encourage the pro-reform and democratic forces."

She said she did not think political uncertainty in Italy amid calls for a general election would affect its EU presidency, and rejected criticism of her style of diplomacy in the British media.

She also said disagreements between France and Italy, mainly over France's nuclear testing programme in the south Pacific, were over, and she would meet French counterpart Herve de Charette on Jan. 20 during a visit by President Jacques Chirac to the Vatican.

## Russian troops kill 27 Chechens

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian troops in Chechnya killed 27 separatist fighters and destroyed an arms depot during the night from Saturday to Sunday, Interfax news agency reported.

The military command in Chechnya refused to say exactly how or where the separatists died but said there were no Russian casualties.

Saturday, Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev predicted an

upsurge in fighting between federal troops and separatists in Chechnya, but said peace talks should continue.

He said the separatists loyal to Chechen independence leader Dzhokhar Dudayev had used a relative lull during peace talks in the Chechen capital Grozny to "prepare their weapons and recruit mercenaries."

"Now is the time when Dudayev's fighters may launch major military operations," Mr. Grachev told

Interfax.

"The latest events in Gudermes and other towns and villages in Chechnya confirm that," he said.

Russian forces regained control of Gudermes, 30 kilometres east of Grozny, on Dec. 25 after some of the worst fighting seen since a ceasefire came into force at the end of June.

Refugees fleeing Gudermes, Chechnya's second biggest town, spoke of hundreds of civilians killed.

## Haiti asks U.N. to remain for extra 6 months

PORT-AU-PRINCE (R) — President-elect Rene Preval formally asked U.N. peacekeeping troops to remain in Haiti an extra six months beyond the force's scheduled Feb. 29 departure, a U.N. spokesman said Saturday.

But if the request is approved, U.S. troops in the peacekeeping mission will not extend their stay beyond the original deadline, U.N. spokesman Eric Falt said.

An advisor to Mr. Preval met late Friday with U.N. officials and representatives of the so-called five friends of Haiti, the governments of France, Canada, Venezuela, Argentina and the United States, to discuss security, human rights and other issues related to the transition.

If the request is approved by the U.N. Security Council, the international peacekeeping troops would spend an additional six months monitoring human rights and helping train Haiti's fledgling national police force, Mr. Falt said.

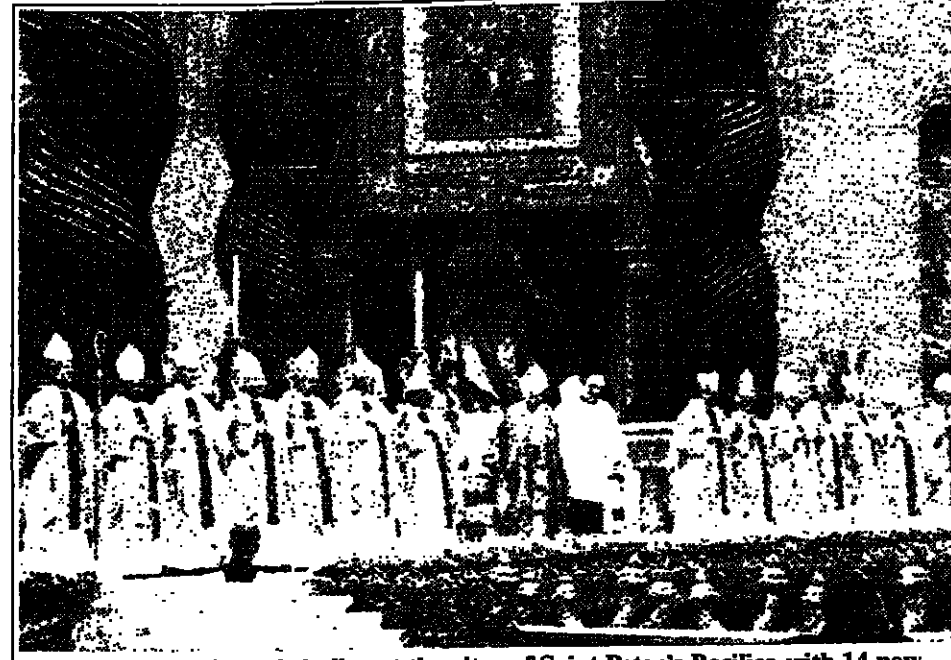
Haiti's police force showed signs of weakness late last year during several outbreaks of violence, raising concern among observers about whether it will be able to keep the peace should violence mount when the U.N. peacekeepers depart.

Of the original 6,000 U.N. troops, about 5,600 remain in Haiti along with 400 civilian police trainers. Of those still there, some 2,000 are Americans. The first contingent of U.S. troops departed on Friday.

"The representative of president-elect Preval indicated that in order to strengthen democracy, the wish of the president-elect is to have a more gradual draw-down beyond Feb. 29, for a period that could extend for another six months," said Mr. Falt.

Mr. Falt described the meeting as "constructive and friendly" and said it reflected the unanimous opinion that more work was needed to strengthen Haiti's democracy.

President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who is scheduled to hand over power to Preval on Feb. 7, had been reluctant to ask for an extension of the peacekeeping mission because of the sensitivity of the issue among many Haitian citizens who recall the U.S. occupation of their country earlier this century.



Pope John Paul II stands in line at the altar of Saint Peter's Basilica with 14 new bishops after a consecration ceremony marking the Epiphany feast (AFP photo)

## 3 dead, thousands of structures submerged by Jakarta floods

JAKARTA (AFP) — Heavy floods of more than four metres engulfed Jakarta and surrounding areas, killing two adults and a child and submerging thousands of buildings, an official said Sunday.

"The three people drowned in the floods yesterday," an official from Jakarta's Flood Relief Center, Reno, said here Sunday.

Reno said millions of people living in Jakarta and its suburbs had been affected by the worst floods in eight years, which were triggered when the city's Ciliwung River burst its banks after several days of heavy rain.

Separately, the Suara Pembaruan daily reported that four people had been taken to hospital after they

were swept along by flood waters in Bogor, west Java, about 50 kilometres south of Jakarta.

Jakarta Governor Suryadi Sudirja was quoted by the Antara news agency as saying the floods were the "worst since 1976."

Tens of thousands of houses have been submerged in waters, over four metres deep in some areas," Reno said, adding that "thousands" of residents had been evacuated from east Jakarta, the worst hit area.

Reno said that the Jakarta regional government has sent food and medical assistance to flood victims, but a resident of south Jakarta, Suhardi, questioned the city's efforts in tackling the problem, which has

occurred yearly for more than 12 years.

"Every year we suffer, not just that our possessions are submerged in the floods, but we also have to deal with diseases from skin problems to diarrhoea," Suhardi was quoted as saying by the Kompas daily.

Reno said that while waters had gone down by half a metre in some areas by Sunday, others areas like central Jakarta were struggling with renewed flooding.

No estimates of the damage caused were available.

Heavy floods in the northern Sumatran province of Aceh last week killed at least 18 people and caused estimated damage of more than \$130 million.

## Japanese opposition calls for elections before budget

TOKYO (AFP) — Japanese opposition leader Ichiro Ozawa Sunday called for new elections before a contentious draft budget for the year from April 1 clears parliament.

Mr. Ozawa, head of the New Frontier Party (NFP), told a press conference in Osaka, western Japan, that elections should be held in February with the fiscal 1996 budget passed in March.

"In order to ask people's will the lower house should be dissolved as soon as possible," he said.

"The elections would not hinder the implementation of the new budget from April," Mr. Ozawa added.

Mr. Ozawa said the house of representatives could be dissolved Thursday, when an extraordinary parliament session is convened to elect the successor to Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama, who resigned Friday.

Elections for the 511 member house of representatives must be held by July 1997. The NFP currently has 170 seats, while the three party ruling coalition has 294 — 209 for the Liberal Democratic Party, 63 for the Social Democratic Party and 22 for the new Sakigake Party.

LDP Secretary General Koichi Kato told reporters earlier there will be no general elections "for at least six months."

Trade Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, head of the LDP, the biggest group in the ruling coalition, is expected to be chosen as new premier by the ruling group.

Mr. Ozawa quit the LDP in 1993, when the Conservative Party lost its 38-year grip on Japanese politics. He played a key role in merging non-Communist opposition forces into the NFP in

December 1994.

He became president of the party last month, emerging as a strong contender to Mr. Hashimoto for a future race for the premiership.

Meanwhile, the coalition expects to reach an agreement on the explosive issues of Japan-U.S. security and housing-loan companies' immense bad debts.

A fresh set of common policies under the new administration is based on the platform set up in June 1994 when Tomiichi Murayama took office as premier, coalition leaders stressed.

Mr. Hashimoto will be chosen as the ruling bloc's candidate for next prime minister Monday.

He is likely to be elected to the premiership at an extraordinary parliament session Thursday.

The preface to the new platform, hammered out overnight, says the new policy accords "inherit the Murayama administration's policies, while tackling new tasks," Jiji press reported.

The new tasks are seen to include the disposal of huge bad debts left after Japan's speculative economic "bubble" burst in the late 1980s, security ties with the United States, and regulation of religious groups.

The LDP has proposed a 26-point accord, including a new pledge to bring an early settlement to problem loans by "Jusen" housing-loan companies, press reports said.

The NFP is set to grill the coalition over its plan to use public money to cope with the Jusen debts.

The LDP also wants to reaffirm Japan-U.S. security ties which have come under heavy criticism since the September rape of a 12-year-old girl, allegedly by U.S. servicemen, in Okinawa.

It hopes to make the common platform stipu-

late that the coalition will promote consolidation and reduction of U.S. military facilities on Okinawa "in harmony with the goals of the Japan-U.S. security treaty," an LDP official was quoted as saying.

Calls for cutbacks on U.S. bases have increased since the rape in the southern island, but Japan is obliged to provide facilities to U.S. forces under the 1960 bilateral security treaty.

The SDP, however, the second force in the ruling camp with the LDP and the centrist new party Sakigake, wants more determination towards the reduction of US facilities, demanding the common policy brings a "visible" result, reports said.

With power shifting from Mr. Murayama to Mr. Hashimoto, a reputed hawk, some SDP members fear the scale of the reduction of U.S. bases may retreat.

When Murayama resigned Friday, Okinawa Governor Masahide Ota said Mr. Murayama, the first Socialist premier in 47 years, was "the first prime minister" with whom he could discuss anything without reserve.

The SDP also called for maintaining the Murayama administration's view on Japan's militant past. Marking the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, Mr. Murayama last year offered a "heartfelt apology" for Japan's wrongdoings to its Asian neighbours.

The LDP also wants to definitively separate politics and religion in an apparent attack on the NFP, which is backed by the nation's largest Buddhist group.

3 share 42.1 million pounds lottery bonanza

LONDON (AFP) — The big winners are expected to share a bumper British lottery prize this week of 42 million pounds (\$65 million), the lottery organisers said early Sunday. According to Camelot, the private group which runs the lottery, almost nine Britons out of ten changed the luck Saturday because the record prize. Camelot said it would take the computers most of the night to determine the exact number of winners. The lottery firm said punters had bet total of 128 million pounds (\$198 million) including 60 million just Saturday. The six winning numbers drawn on Saturday night were 2, 3, 4, 13, 42 and 49 with 24 as the bonus number. The BBC estimates that almost 20 million people had watched the draw on television. Winners will share a total of 42.1 million pounds. Eight million lottery cards were sold in one hour on Saturday and Camelot said the huge prize had attracted punters from France, Ireland, the Netherlands and other countries. At Salford near Manchester, 13 people were slightly injured when a car ploughed into a service station where people were queuing to validate their lottery tickets. The lottery fever which gripped Britain since the lottery was established year ago is criticised by some quarters, notably by the clergy who denounce the gains involved as "obscene and immoral." However, according to Camelot, between 25 and 30 per cent of lottery money goes to charity and to finance cultural sporting and other projects.

1995 — Earth's warmest year, records

LONDON (R) — The Earth's temperature in 1995 was the warmest since global records began in 1860, Britain's Meteorological Office has said. The University of East Anglia in eastern England and the Met Office Hadley Centre for Climate Prediction analysed data collected from 1,000 weather stations and observations from ships at buoys. Their findings showed the surface temperature of the Earth was about 0.40C warmer than the long-term (1960-9) average. "Although differences of a few hundredths of a degree between global average temperatures individual years are a significant, 1995 continues the warming trend begun the mid-1970s," the Met Office said in a statement. "The previous warmest year, 1990, was 0.36C warmer than average." The Met Office said global surface temperatures have recovered from the cool caused by the 1991 eruption of Mt. Pinatubo in the Philippines. The recent Niño, a periodic warming of the eastern Pacific ended early last year as ocean temperatures there are now cooler than normal, it added.

Romanian police arrest Turk for heroin smuggling

BUCHAREST (R) — Romanian police arrested a Turkish citizen suspected of trying to smuggle kilograms of heroin from Bulgaria into Romania, an official has said. "We arrested a Turkish citizen travelling in a car from Bulgaria. We found 4.5 kg of heroin in the car," customs officer Lt. Nicolae told Reuters from the Giurgiu border checkpoint, 60 km south of Bucharest. Ms. Nicolae declined to identify the suspect. She said the heroin had a street value of around \$550,000. Over the past two years Romanian police have seized more than 2,000 kg of drugs on the "Balkan drug route" from the Middle East to West Europe.



## Indian premier sets April poll

NEW DELHI (R) — Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao has set general elections for April, starting a three-party tussle for power in which no single issue looks strong enough to bring anyone outright victory.

A government spokesman quoted Mr. Rao as saying Saturday that elections would definitely be held in April. Senior officials said they would probably take place before the beginning of the harvest season in mid-April.

Mr. Rao's favourite theme of "stability and economic development" has already been criticised within his own congress party, whose senior ministers say it lacks credibility. Some ministers say the economic theme make little sense to many of the country's 500 million voters, mostly the rural poor.

"Most of them do not even know who Manmohan Singh is," remarked one minister, referring to Mr. Rao's finance minister who has pioneered four and half years of economic reforms. The absence of a central theme means the three main parties — Congress, the rightwing Hindu Nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and a leftist-led alliance of lower caste Hindus, Socialists and Communists — will have to create their platforms from a clutch of varied issues.

"Corruption in high places and national security are definitely going to be our main areas of focus," said BJP's spokesperson Sushma Swaraj.

Mr. Rao took office in June 1991 at the head of a minority government, surviving several close calls during opposition sponsored confidence votes.

Some analysts say the Congress may lose its position as the single largest party in parliament after the polls. To form a government, Mr. Rao may have to look to other parties, but he has ruled out any alliance with the BJP.

That could leave him with an even more uncomfortable prospect of fishing for help from the leftist front, a group more vehemently opposed to his reforms than the BJP.

Moreover, the third front is grappling with a leadership crisis after former Prime Minister Vishwanath Prasad Singh ruled himself out of the race.

Mr. Singh is regarded as the architect of a lower caste Hindu alliance that shores up the front.

Analysts say the alliance is too sharply divided at present to mount a credible challenge to the predominantly upper caste Congress and the BJP.

"We now have so many prime ministerial candidates that it is not funny," said Laloo Prasad Yadav, chief minister of the second most populous state of Bihar and a key leader of the leftist grouping.

"If we can resolve our differences, we can seriously think of forming the next government," Mr. Yadav told Reuters. "Until then it is a pipedream."

The front is counting on Jyoti Basu, charismatic Marxist chief minister of West Bengal for the past 19 years, to accept a leadership role.

But Mr. Basu does not so far appear keen on the job. "I may be old, but I am not senile," he retorted, when asked if he would make a bid to become India's first Communist prime minister.



British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind (left) speaks to reporters upon his arrival at Hong Kong's Kai Tak airport as Governor Chris Patten looks on (AFP photo)

## White House handover of "missing" records fuels Republican suspicions

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The White House handover this week of "missing" documents long sought by federal and congressional investigators looking into the Whitewater scandal fueled Republican suspicions of wrongdoing by the Clintons.

The White House late Friday announced it unexpectedly had found copies of missing documents from Hillary Clinton's law firm that detail her work for a failed Arkansas savings and loan association that is the subject of civil and criminal investigations.

The original billing records disappeared from the Rose law firm, in which Hillary Clinton was a partner, before the president took office in January 1993. Federal and congressional investigators subpoenaed them in 1994, and the White House has said it did not have them.

It was the second belated release of sought-after material by the White House in the past three days, and sparked new allegations of a cover-up from the Clintons, Republican critics.

Senator Alfonse d'Amato, the New York Republican chair of the Senate Whitewater Committee, late Friday called the finding of the copies "the second miraculous discovery within the past 24 hours."

The first, according to Sen. d'Amato, was the release late Wednesday of a two-year-old memo written by a former presidential

aide that said Hillary Clinton played a "much greater role in the firing of the travel office employees than the White House had acknowledged."

The Clintons' personal attorney, David Kendall, announced Friday that the billing records for Hillary Clinton's work for the now-defunct Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan had been discovered late Thursday by the Clintons' personal assistant, Carolyn Huber, in her White House east wing office.

Mr. Kendall told reporters he could not explain why the 115-page records had not been found earlier, and that he had searched the office himself. Ms. Huber planned to comment after consulting a lawyer, he added.

Mr. Kendall said the documents confirmed previous declarations about the limited nature and amount of work done in the 1980s by Hillary Clinton and the Rose law firm.

"With the public release of these records, yet another set of baseless allegations about Whitewater can now be laid to rest," he added.

Hillary Clinton has said repeatedly that she did little work for Madison, and in written responses to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. said she did not remember working on the matter.

The records showed that she billed some \$6,000 at a rate of \$120 an hour, a total of 50 hours of work. Investigators sought the

documents in order to determine how much work she did for Madison, a thrift run by James McDougal, the Clintons' business partner in the Whitewater real estate venture.

McDougal said he hired the Rose law firm at the request of then-Arkansas governor Bill Clinton.

Sen. d'Amato, speaking at a news conference after his committee received the Rose law firm billing documents, said, "these new records raise volumes of questions, serious questions as it relates to the first lady, her statements, the statements that she has made to the RTC (Resolution Trust Corp.)."

"We have now reached the point of some very serious questions whether or not there has been conduct that borders on contempt, obstruction and false statements that have been made," he said.

The RTC is the now-defunct agency that supervised the bailout of the thrift industry, including Madison, which failed in 1989.

Investigators found it riddled with corruption and its bailout cost taxpayers more than \$60 million.

The billing records also were handed over to the Whitewater independent counsel, Kenneth Starr. They had been sought by the RTC and by the justice department's special prosecutor in December 1993, before an independent counsel was named.

## Kashmir hostages complete six months in captivity

SRINAGAR, India (AFP) — Four Western tourists abducted by Muslim separatists while trekking in the Himalayan state of Kashmir complete six months in captivity Monday with no early end in sight to their ordeal.

Uncertainty over the fate of Britons Paul Wells and Keith Mangan, American Donald Hutchings and German Dirk Hasert has increased in recent weeks with the kidnappers claiming they no longer hold the four.

Al-Faran, the shadowy Muslim extremist group which abducted Mr. Wells, Mr. Mangan, Mr. Hutchings and Mr. Hasert in July, claimed last week the hostages had been rescued by the Indian army after a Dec. 4 gun battle.

The Indian army and Kashmir government officials have dismissed the claim as propaganda, but

they have acknowledged that a top Al-Faran guerrilla was killed in the clash.

"We have information that all four are safe and in good health," said Mahinder Sabharwal, police chief of Kashmir, the only Muslim-majority state in Hindu-dominated India.

"Their continued captivity is a cause of worry to us," he added. "We appeal to the captors to release the four on humanitarian grounds and end the agony of their families."

The abduction has become the second-longest kidnap drama in Kashmir, where Muslim militants have seized dozens of locals, Indians and foreigners since 1989, mainly for ransom or to seek the release of jailed separatists.

A former Indian politician, Pankaj Sinha, spent one year in captivity before being released in 1994.

Mr. Wells, 23, Mr. Mangan, 33, and Mr. Hutchings, 42, were seized while they were trekking in the Kashmiri resort of Pahalgam on July 4 along with John Childs, an American who escaped within days of his capture.

Mr. Hasert, 26, was abducted on July 8 in the same area as was a 27-year-old Norwegian, Hans Christian-Ostro, who was beheaded by the militants in August, sparking international outrage.

Al-Faran, which Indian officials say is a group comprising mainly Afghan mercenaries, has demanded the release of 15 jailed militants in exchange for the Western tourists. New Delhi has steadfastly refused the demand.

## Rifkind to face anxious Hong Kong legislators

HONG KONG (AFP) — British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind will face dissatisfied Hong Kong legislators Monday in an attempt to boost confidence in the territory in the run up to 1997.

In an unprecedented move Mr. Rifkind will take part in a question-and-answer session with legislators worried that Britain is not doing enough to uphold promises over the territory's future after it returns to Chinese rule.

"Time is running out and Britain has not delivered," independent legislator Elizabeth Wong told AFP, adding that Britain's last colonial Governor here Chris Patten is no longer in a position to influence matters.

"It's a great pity that he has been sidelined... I am very concerned that we won't have a high degree of autonomy after July 1, 1997."

Mr. Rifkind, who travels on to China Tuesday, sought to reassure residents here upon his arrival late Saturday.

"Serving the interests of the people of Hong Kong is one of the most important priorities of the British government," he said.

"I see myself going to China as an advocate for Hong Kong, ensuring that together with the governor and together with all those who are working for the best interest of the people of Hong Kong we can ensure that Hong Kong continues to have the bright future."

Independent legislator Emily Lau thinks it may be too late. "The British are no longer powerful. Practical, hard-nosed Hong Kong people, including many legislative councillors, gravitate towards power."

This power, Ms. Lau suggests, is now seen in the Beijing-appointed preparatory committee for Hong Kong, seen as a shadow government in the territory.

The preparatory committee includes none of China's critics in Hong Kong. Notably absent are members of the Democratic Party, the largest party in the legislature.

"I think the public and the Legco (legislative council) are quite concerned about 1997," said Democratic Party legislator Albert Chan.

"For the Democrats the recent appointment of the preparatory committee did

not seem to respect the general wishes of the Hong Kong people, and the appointments are dominated by the business sector, so the general public view will not be reflected," said Mr. Chan, who represents a low-income constituency near the Chinese border.

"Mr. Rifkind is looking forward to a free-ranging and informal discussion," a foreign office spokesman said.

He said the foreign secretary would discuss a range of issues with Chinese leaders during his visit there "over which progress needs to be made over the next 18 months."

Among these are the continuity of Hong Kong's legal system, a fraught subject as currently cases are heard in English based on British common law with the Privy Council in London as the highest court. Immigration and nationality will also be high on the agenda, the spokesman said.

Many here are angry that Britain offered passports to only 50,000 heads of household and their families.

Legislators are also seeking for Britain to take the lead in recognising the trav-

el documents Hong Kong people will use after the transfer of power on July 1, 1995.

"Members are still determined to raise the intractable problem of British citizenship for the 3.5 million Hong Kong British subjects," said Ms. Lau.

Mr. Patten has also taken up the cudgels on behalf of Hong Kong people on the passport issue, but there have been no signs of a change in London.

Mr. Rifkind had no official functions Sunday. He and Mr. Patten, both keen walkers, took a trip to one of Hong Kong's off-shore islands for a picnic.

Mr. Rifkind and Mr. Patten also met former British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd who is here on a private visit.

In the evening Mr. Rifkind was to meet members of the local conservatives abroad group.

Monday he will tour a housing estate and shopping mall and preside at a ceremony at the new British consulate general's building, which will be Britain's official offices after 1997.

## 'Singapore judiciary will be target of foreign media'

SINGAPORE (AFP) — A top government lawyer warned in remarks published Sunday that Singapore's judiciary will be the target of foreign media attacks because the city state's prosperity was seen as harmful to the Western democratic model of economic development.

Attorney-General Chan Sek Keong said Western human rights activists, academics and opinion makers saw Singapore as exemplifying a form of neo-Confucianist threat to freedom in Asia.

They felt Singapore should not be allowed to succeed as a model for economic development if Western democracy was to prevail in Asia, the Sunday Times reported him saying at an annual gathering of lawyers and judges Saturday.

At the same function, Singapore's top judge Yong Pung How also slammed the foreign press for purportedly reporting that Singapore courts were more interested in punishing offenders than in rehabilitating them.

"This is a wholly inaccurate representation of our sentencing policy," Chief Justice Yong said, adding that reforming an offender was an important goal for the courts here.

A day after President Boris Yeltsin accepted the resignations of two of the Communists' hate-figures — Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Shakhrai and Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev — a news agency said he planned to sack Economy Minister Yevgeny Yasin, who has promoted free market reforms.

Ekho Moskvyy agency quoted Kremlin sources as saying Mr. Yeltsin, who last week told Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin to root out "saboteurs" at the economy ministry, had signed a decree sacking Mr. Yasin and his deputy, Yakov Urinson.

Mr. Yasin is an ally of Deputy Prime Minister Anatoly Chubais, who is reviled by the Communists for his privatisation schemes.

## S. Korea adds removal of biological weapons to food aid conditions

SEOUL (AFP) — North Korea will not receive any additional food aid from South Korea unless the threat from its biological and chemical weapons is removed, a government official here said Sunday.

"The government has decided to link the elimination of such threats to any additional food delivery to North Korea," the unnamed official told Yonhap news agency.

Washington and Tokyo will be asked to follow suit at a tripartite policy coordination meeting on Jan. 24 and 25 in Hawaii where the possibility of food aid to North Korea will be high on the agenda, he said.

He described North Korea's biological and chemical weapons as the most stringent military threat from the north following a U.S.-North Korea accord in 1994, which defused a nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula.

"Though the nuclear

question is about to be resolved, the military threat has not been removed as long as North Korea builds up biological and chemical weapons," the official said.

South Korea wants North Korea to discard its biological and chemical weapons stocks, which reportedly total about 1,000 tonnes, he said.

"But, if the North refuses to go along, there should be a guarantee that it would restrict their development and use," he added.

Seoul rushed 150,000 tonnes of rice to North Korea between June and September, but talks in Beijing on additional aid broke down in acrimony partly over the North's refusal to recognise the talks as official.

South Korea has since urged Pyongyang to change its basic attitude of hostility to Seoul, resume official inter-Korean talks and accept a preliminary on-the-site survey to assess its

exact food needs before food aid can resume.

In a New Year's eve statement, Foreign Minister Gong Ro-myung indicated that aid would be "inevitable" if the food situation in the North could be proven critical.

But Mr. Gong charged in a weekend interview with Yonhap news agency that Pyongyang had not even dipped into its military rice stockpile to alleviate its severe food shortages.

"The World Food Programme (WFP) suggests that the food shortage in the north is serious, but it seems to have not considered the military rice stockpile," he said of a WFP report which said two million children faced starvation.

"It is true that North Korea faces hardships but there are no signs that it is heading for an immediate breakdown, at least until the traditional spring hunger period (in March and April)," Mr. Gong added.

## Ministers under threat as Yeltsin faces Communists

MOSCOW (R) — Russia's liberal economy minister denied he was being sacked Saturday in an incident that highlighted potential pressure on the government after big Communist gains in parliament.

A day after President Boris Yeltsin accepted the resignations of two of the Communists' hate-figures — Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Shakhrai and Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev — a news agency said he planned to sack Economy Minister Yevgeny Yasin, who has promoted free market reforms.

Ekho Moskvyy agency quoted Kremlin sources as saying Mr. Yeltsin, who last week told Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin to root out "saboteurs" at the economy ministry, had signed a decree sacking Mr. Yasin and his deputy, Yakov Urinson.

Mr. Yasin is an ally of Deputy Prime Minister Anatoly Chubais, who is reviled by the Communists for his privatisation schemes.

Ekho Moskvyy later quoted Mr. Yeltsin's chief of staff, Sergei Filatov, as saying he had seen no decree sacking Mr. Yasin and the minister himself said he knew nothing of it.

"I remain in my post, as far as I understand," he told Reuters. "These rumours are false."

It would be possible, however, for Mr. Yeltsin to sign such a decree without Mr. Filatov or Mr. Yasin being aware of it until later.

Mr. Yeltsin, whose power far outweighs that of parliament, has yet to say whether he will stand for reelection in June.

But after a poor showing for Mr. Chernomyrdin's Our Home Is Russia bloc and other reform parties in the Dec. 17 vote for the state Duma, the president and his prime minister must weigh whether to make concessions to Communist and nationalist sentiment ahead of the June 16 presidential election.

Mr. Yeltsin's spokesman, Sergei Medvedev, was quick to reassure Western

governments that there would be no change in foreign policy after Mr. Kozyrev's departure. But he added that the minister was paying the price for his "mistakes". The Communists accused Mr. Kozyrev of selling out Russia's interests.

Mr. Chernomyrdin has said he plans no big changes in government policy or personnel. But he is under pressure, as our home won only 55 seats in the 450-seat Duma compared to the Communists' 157 and 51 for Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's ultra-nationalists.

TASS said the prime minister would meet Grigory Yavlinsky, leader of the liberal Yabloko Party, after Sunday's Orthodox Christmas holiday. He met Mr. Zhirinovskiy Thursday and Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov Friday.

Zyuganov told ITAR-TASS news agency Saturday they had discussed the running of parliamentary business but did not raise the issue of cabinet posts for Communists.



## Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation  
Established 1975  
مؤسسة الصحافة الأردنية

Chairman of the Board of Directors:  
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Director General:  
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Jordan Press Foundation,  
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 684311, 699634

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Facsimile: 696183

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.  
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the  
Jordan Times advertising department.

## Opportunity to save Iraq

FOLLOWING ITS invasion of Kuwait in 1990, Iraq was put under a harsh U.N. sanctions regime. Only Friday the Security Council extended the sanctions for 60 days, and there seems to be no end in sight for the council's decisions to keep extending the sanctions. Meanwhile reports from Iraq draw the bleakest picture of the human situation in that country. Travellers tell tales of horror about children dying from malnutrition or from lack of basic medications. Lawlessness prevails, especially during darkness. Reliable reports say even security forces are out to loot people instead of protecting their property.

In the meantime, the country is virtually divided into three parts, the Kurdish north, the Sunni centre and the Shi'ite south. The Baghdad regime has started selling government property, beginning with cars, to ensure enough funds to run the country.

The Iraqi regime has become powerless in its struggle to end the situation. Although it seemingly is able to project a posture of strength and cohesiveness, it shows from time to time some cracks. Baghdad is unable to fulfil the obligations demanded from it by the Security Council resolutions. And with two exclusion zones, one in the south and one in the north, it has no ability whatsoever to extend real rule beyond central Iraq.

One more factor that completes the dark picture is the Iraqi opposition which is scattered all over the globe. Jordan has been spearheading an effort to get the Iraqi opposition to sit together and work out a common agenda based on a vision for the future of the country. So far some factions have responded positively. Some have doubts. In his press conference yesterday, U.S. Secretary of Defence William Perry lent support to Jordan's initiative and said that the U.S. supports His Majesty King Hussein's initiative and "follow his lead." And the King's lead will only help alleviate the suffering of the Iraqis, maintain the territorial integrity of Iraq and rehabilitate it to regain its positive role and position in the region.

Jordan is offering the Iraqi people a golden opportunity to save their country. For the sake of Iraq, they have to seize it.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

ISRAEL HAS poisoned the atmosphere in Palestine by assassinating Yahya Ayyash, a leading Hamas member and by doing so created new problems for itself and for the Palestinians alike, charged Mahmoud Rimawi, a writer in Al Ra'i daily. It is noticed that the Israelis committed this crime following reports about an agreement between the Palestine National Authority (PNA) and Hamas in Cairo to halt Hamas's military operations against Israeli occupation, said the writer. The assassination of Mr. Ayyash was very embarrassing to the PNA and prompted Hamas to declare that it will take revenge on the Israelis, something which will violate the Hamas-PNA accord. The writer said that the PNA is embarrassed because the crime was committed in the self-rule area of Gaza where Hamas has most backing and the event dealt a serious blow to the ongoing preparations and the campaigning for the Palestinian elections. It should be said that while Israel adamantly refuses to offer any kind of compensation to the Palestinians for their sufferings and tragedies during the 28 years of occupation, it is determined to seek revenge on certain Palestinian activists who had been involved in a legitimate struggle against occupation, said the writer. By committing this crime Israel has thus opened the door for reprisals and a new cycle of violence which could have very serious consequences on the peace process.

RECENT STATISTICS about unemployment in Jordan in the past year revealed that it currently stands at 14.6 per cent of the workforce and this means that any efforts exerted by the government in the past year to contain this serious problem ended in failure, according to Mohammad Daoud, writing in Al-Dustour. The writer said that the only meaningful and effective way to deal with this chronic issue is a brave decision by the government in deed rather than word, to replace Jordanians with local workers in all domains, a process that could be taken gradually rather than abruptly. He said every year the unemployment problem is aggravated with the graduation of large numbers of young people turned out from universities and schools; and this means that it is imperative for the government to start taking measures immediately. It is unreasonable to see Jordan facing mounting social and economic problems due to unemployment while the country abounds with an estimated 200,000 guest workers from Egypt, Syria, Iraq and other countries assuming various jobs that can be taken by the local workers, added the writer. He said the government should stop issuing permits to non-Jordanians and take firm steps towards ending the presence of non-Jordanian workers in the local labour market.

## For the 3rd World, Western democracy is a nightmare

By Robert D. Kaplan

WASHINGTON — America needs to curb its missionary zeal to establish multiparty systems in every Third World country as fast as it can.

Its rote prescription for undeveloped and newly "liberated" nations — elections within one year, followed by stability — is more likely to lead to chaos than to democracy.

This is not to deny democracy's successes, especially in some Eastern European states. But the West must acknowledge its limitations, at least as a quick fix, in a world torn by exploding populations, diminishing natural resources, struggling governments and ethnic rivalries.

The West should shift its foreign development strategy from one of instant gratification to one of mature patience, encouraging a slower, but more realistic, route to democracy.

The West seems to assume that its victory in the cold war has paved the way for worldwide democracy. But the demise of the Soviet Union does not necessarily justify creating political parties in, say, Rwanda, where the estab-

lishment of a multiparty system and a coalition government in 1992 hardened ethnic divisions that erupted into civil war and genocide in 1994.

Or in Cambodia, where the United Nations spent several billion dollars on a high-profile election in 1993 that has given us an increasingly dictatorial, corrupt and brutal government that cannot even control its army.

Or in Haiti, where we can only hope that Jean-Bertrand Aristide, whom the United States did not allow to run for a second presidential term, can keep the country together from behind the scenes.

States are not formed by geography, war, settlement patterns and the rise of literate bourgeoisies. Nor are countries necessarily strengthened by elections. Indeed, democracy initially weakens many states because it demands ineffectual compromises.

Totalitarianism is anathema to us, but remember that Bosnia Muslims, Croats and Serbs lived together peacefully and intermarried under Tito's jackboot.

Yet even the Balkan countries — with their high

literacy rates, low birthrates and some tradition of a middle class — are better candidates for democracy than much of the Third World. When elections are introduced suddenly into societies where the poor predominate, random crime and gangsterism often fill the void vacated by tyranny.

Witness South Africa, where in the past year violent crime has increased by as much as 75 per cent in some areas. Of course, this is preferable to apartheid, and political violence there has greatly subsided. But if the government cannot eventually stabilise crime rates, a new form of tyranny, or chaos, could evolve.

Democratic elections often intensify ethnic and regional divisions rather than heal them. In the Caucasus, the collapse of the Soviet Union brought nationalist-democrats to power in Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Each leader furthered his country's slide into a brutal war against the other. Only after the freely elected president of Azerbaijan, Abulfaz Elchibey, had been toppled in a coup that brought a former Communist leader to power did a modicum of

stability return. Some months later, the two countries agreed to a ceasefire.

Because democracy neither forms states nor strengthens them initially, a multiparty system is best suited to nations that already have an established bureaucracy and a middle class paying income taxes and where the main issues of property and power-sharing have been resolved, leaving politicians to argue about budgets.

Two perfect examples are Taiwan and Greece, both middle-class, ethnically homogeneous societies that have been able to move, fitfully, toward democracy for decades.

Likewise, Chile's impressive economic growth and the withering away of its military dictatorship have made it a suitable candidate for real democracy.

Sometimes an authoritarian regime becomes so odious that out of concern for its citizens — or out of worry that it will destabilise its region — the West feels compelled to get involved. Thus Nigeria may be the next battle-ground of democracy — and outsiders need to be cautious there. Nigeria has a volatile

mixture of ethnic and regional divisions, and it has a long history of money laundering, drug smuggling and forgery scams. Its increasingly urbanised population is doubling every 22 years and its natural resources are rapidly being depleted.

If the West were to force the reintroduction of democracy before attending to other changes, like a reorganisation of the military, and leave the day after a "successful" election, Nigeria could slowly unravel.

The example of Nigeria also illustrates how hypocritical Americans can be about exporting democracy. Nigeria is far less developed than, say, Egypt, according to the United Nations. Yet, with an eye on geopolitical priorities, the United States doesn't even dare to consider where a real democracy might lead Egypt.

What can the West do? It should shift its emphasis in the Third World from holding elections to promoting family planning, environmental renewal, road building and other stabilising projects. It needs to sponsor more bread-and-butter literacy and agricultural

programmes — especially those that focus on women, who in many societies are the keys to cultural transformation.

Yes, some dictators may take advantage of such programmes, but this approach is better than throwing our hands and more practical than elections. History and cultures can rarely be forced by expensive stunts like the United Nations elections in Cambodia. And each failure only provides more ammunition for American isolationists.

This is why even in the Balkans, where there has been a level of social development not enjoyed in Haiti or Cambodia, arming the Bosnian Muslims to create a regional balance of terror is a safer bet than risking NATO's reputation on elections within a year, followed by peace.

The writer is a contributing editor of The Atlantic Monthly and is the author of the forthcoming "The Ends of the Earth: A Journey at the Dawn of the 21st Century." He contributed this comment to The New York Times.

## About peace, war and 'mindless materialism'

By Flora Lewis

PARIS — Maybe peace has a better chance in the coming year. The fighting has at last stopped in Bosnia and isn't going to resume so long as NATO is there. By the time the troops leave, reconstruction will have started and, hopefully, new political arrangements will have taken hold.

Peace talks are resuming between Israel and Syria with a new goal, a broad agreement for the region, and, it seems, a new momentum. The Palestinians will hold their first elections for a national authority this month, and the focus will shift to building an economic as well as political base for a state.

Chechnya is still sputtering with occasional bombs and gun bursts, and Algeria is still grimly murderous, but at least there, are approaches to a settlement. There are other points of tension around the world, some familiar like the Korean Peninsula and West and Central Africa, some unattended that could put bizarre, as yet unrecognised names of disaster in the headlines.

But the outbreak of violent nationalism and religious and ethnic conflicts which erupted when the end of the cold war loosened constraints seems to be ebbing a little, in favour of a search for more

material benefits. UNESCO's charter proclaims that "war starts in the minds of men," and so the organisation stresses culture as the recipe for peace. In this century, however, wars have mostly been about ideas and notions of identity.

Conquest is no longer seen as the great avenue to enrichment. Modern economies offer much better ways, and it has been demonstrated that even victory can bring impoverishment.

The two overwhelming ideas which brought wars, fascism and expansive communism, are discredited. Older ideas having to do with group or community identity remain potent, but there are vast new layers of doubt about their capacity to promote heaven on earth.

If war begins in the minds of men, writes Robert Cooper, a British diplomat, "mindless materialism may be where peace begins." His provocative comment comes in a review of a book by Christopher Coker, "War and the Twentieth Century: A Study of War and Modern Consciousness." In Survival, the quarterly of the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London.

Marx taught that the "contradictions of capitalism," greed and economic

rivalry, were the causes of war. It hasn't worked that way. There are no signs that greed and economic rivalry have diminished in the world. But they are not what modern wars have been about, although the continuing intense competition to export weapons does exacerbate tensions, particularly in East and Southeast Asia now where a dangerous new arms race is developing.

From Mr. Coker's book, Mr. Cooper brings this insight: "The process of modernisation in the last century (in Europe) brought with it alienation and uncertainty. Salvation was sought in absolutes, in the crowd and in war... Perhaps the reason that it is easy to evoke a fear of Islam — although most Islamic societies are politically and economically unsuccessful and so hardly threatening — is that Islam represents an idea, where we have none."

And Mr. Cooper suggests that it may be reassuring that the explosive growth of Asian societies is based on "Western materialism without the ideas that paved the way to it." He says that "perhaps that means they are no threat to themselves or to us."

There is something intellectually and emotionally unsatisfying in the proposition that "mindless mater-

ialism" is the best way to avoid war. But it is a healthy challenge to mushy thoughts that education and exposure to "others" can talk people out of carefully cultivated hatreds and grievances, or prevent them from committing atrocities. This terrible and dazzling century has proved the opposite.

It has also developed the means and techniques to improve the material welfare of vast numbers of people. If most lives were as "nasty, brutish and short" today as when the century began, with a global population of 2 billion, we would not be ending the century with nearly 6 billion.

André Malraux is often quoted for having said that "the 21st century will be spiritual or it will not be." But it isn't really mindless to want to live decently, and it isn't really spiritual to elevate heroic myths for killing and dying above humane life.

Perhaps a little more modesty "in the minds of men" is what is needed to chase away the demonic urge to war. Peace may not be paradise but it is still as true as when General Sherman said it that "war is hell." It looks as if more people are coming to agree on that.

International Herald Tribune

## Tense Mostar seen crucial to lasting Bosnia peace

By Nicholas Doughty  
Reuters

MOSTAR — The world anxiously watched besieged Sarajevo during the Bosnian conflict, but it is the divided city of Mostar that could eventually decide whether peace lasts in the Balkans.

The scene of bitter fighting between Muslims, Croats and Serbs, Mostar in southwestern Bosnia has been under European Union administration since 1994, when the United States brokered a Muslim-Croat federation.

But the killings of a Muslim youth and a Croat policeman in Mostar in the past week have highlighted just how fragile the federation remains after a confusing three-way war.

The Muslim-Croat alliance functioned well when there was still fighting to be done against the Serbs, but it has barely got off the ground in political terms.

Yet the federation's success is vital to the peace agreement signed last month that also provides for a Bosnian Serb republic to rule the rest of the country.

"The federation will stand or fall depending on what happens in Mostar," said a senior European official in the city. "If it doesn't work out here be-

tween Muslims and Bosnian Croats, it undercuts one side of the peace deal."

The Muslims, who had to fight both the Serbs and Croats around Mostar at different times during the war, are keen to help the European Union (EU) achieve its aim of a unified, multi-ethnic city.

They currently occupy the eastern half of Mostar, ruined by Serb and Croat bombardment.

The Catholic Croats, in the more prosperous west, are more reluctant. They do not want to be part of a country run by a Muslim-led government and would prefer to be part of Croatia.

Zagreb has given political and financial aid to the western half of the city and to the region behind it, close to Croatia proper.

This, in turn, causes more mistrust and suspicion pushing tensions in the city of almost 100,000 people to almost explosive levels in the last few days.

The Muslims, who feared throughout the war that Bosnia would be carved up between Croatia and Serbia, see a prospect of annexation.

ing refugees from returning to their homes.

The two sides have argued about housing and many civilian reconstruction projects, including essential repairs to a dam above Mostar. Now, the problems are even worse.

The Bosnian peace agreement provided for complete freedom of movement in Mostar — something EU administrator Hans Koschnick has threatened to suspend unless tempers cool in the next few days.

Although Spanish troops from the NATO-led peace force in Bosnia are helping to patrol the streets in support of a Western European Union (WEU) police force, the alliance is not ready for major involvement in the problems of Mostar.

"The working assumption in the peace agreement is that the NATO force would help separate Serbs from the Muslim-Croat side," said one alliance official, who asked not to be identified.

## LETTERS

### Misquoted

To the Editor:

IN ITS coverage of a press conference held at the Amman Financial Market (AFM), the Jordan Times quoted me as saying that: "The AFM price index is the highest in five years." This appeared also as a headline for the story on page 9 on Jan. 6, 1996.

Needless to say, I did not say this and my statement was distributed in written text during the press conference. I sincerely hope that such misquotations be dealt with as it will only hurt the credibility of the Jordan Times. I would also appreciate if that mistake would be corrected. Our price index at the AFM started at 100 on Jan. 1, 1992. Today it is around 155. The highest it got was in 1993 when it reached 183.

Umayya Toukan,  
Director general,  
AFM.

## Yeltsin comes out fighting

By Lee Hockstader

PRESIDENT BORIS Yeltsin appeared in public for the first time in two months after Christmas, stepping out onto the Kremlin grounds to assure a group of startled tourists that he will not permit Russia to turn backward despite the Communist victory in parliamentary elections last month.

Speaking on his first day back at work since he was hospitalised with a heart ailment on October 26, Mr. Yeltsin sounded like a man determined to beat back the Communist challenge. While he has not announced his intentions, it is widely assumed he will run in presidential elections in June — if he permits them to be held.

"We won't give anyone an opportunity to move backward," he said, looking reasonably mindless and sounding like his usual gruff self. "We've (had) enough experiments. The Russian people are fed up with experimenting. Russia's situation now is such that if it gets pushed backward, there could be trouble."

The remarks by the president, who says he will make his own political plans known in early February, suggested that he is feeling the heat of the presidential vote even though it is more than five months off.

He is already facing a daunting field of challengers, all of them heartened by Mr. Yeltsin's rock-bottom approval ratings and the lackluster showing of pro-government forces in the elections on December 17 for the Duma, Russia's lower house of parliament.

Even former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, who has been flirting with a presidential bid for more than two years even though he is widely disliked, has been edging closer to an announcement. In a round of interviews last month, he hinted broadly that what Russia needs is someone with vast political experience — someone, in fact, just like him.

The more realistic candidates are the ones who did well in the Duma elections. Foremost among them are the Communists, who collected 22.3 per cent of the parliamentary vote and can count on an army of loyal retirees to pull the lever for them again in June. Their likely presidential nominee is party leader Gennady Zyuganov, a stolid former bureaucrat who lacks charisma but is now a proven vote-getter.

Ultrationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy has also said he is running for president. Although his chances appear slim, he has been consistently underestimated by analysts and by polls, and his party managed to win more than 7 million votes, or 11.2 per cent of the total, in the parliamentary ballot.

Alexander Lebed, a dour former army general, said last month that he too would run despite his par-

ty's dismal 4.3 per cent share of the parliamentary vote. Lebed even hinted he would like to make a deal with the Communists, which might have looked appealing before he bombed in the legislative elections.

Mr. Lebed seemed popular before he turned to full-time politicking last fall. The more voters got to see of him, the less they liked him. Many Russians said they did not want a military man to hold power, no matter how much of a mess the country is in.

Grigory Yavlinsky, a telegenic young reformer whose party won 6.9 per cent of the parliamentary vote, has indicated he may run for president. His candidacy would be a particular threat to Mr. Yeltsin, as it could split the pro-reform vote and clear the way for a Communist or nationalist victory.

"Anyway you look at it, Yeltsin's got big problems," a diplomat based here said. "He's got trouble from the Communists, trouble from the nationalists and trouble from his own camp in the person of Yavlinsky."

One question is whether Mr. Yeltsin will seek some pretext to cancel or postpone the elections, which some in his camp see as unwinnable.

Another is whether Mr. Yeltsin will be physically able to run for reelection. He is an unhealthy 64-year-old man in a country where the average life expectancy for males is 57. He has been out of action for more than three of the last six months suffering from acute ischemia, a disease that restricts the flow of blood to the heart.

After his last bout in October, he was able to speak only with difficulty. After spending a month in the hospital, he moved to a government rest home where he continued to recuperate for another month.

Meanwhile, for weeks before the parliamentary elections, the main candidates crisscrossed the country, some of them visiting dozens of cities and towns and giving scores of speeches and press conferences. Mr. Zyuganov and Mr. Zhirinovskiy, the two most successful candidates, would have several appearances each on a given day, sometimes in different cities.

By all indications, Mr. Yeltsin could hardly withstand such a schedule. He acknowledged as much himself, saying that he does not plan to put in very long working days now that he is back in his Kremlin office.

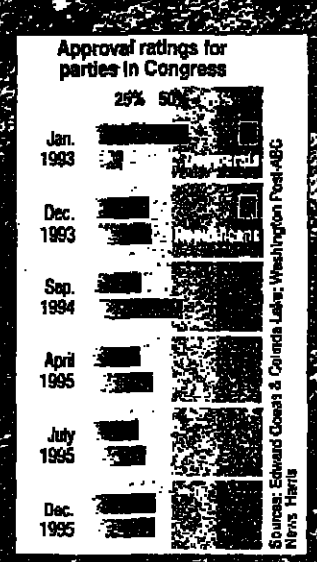
Noting that his travel schedule in the coming months includes visits to China and Norway in March and April, he said: "I have to get stronger before the visit to China — especially since there are plans to visit Shanghai as well as Beijing."

The Washington Post



# A big year up at the White House

America's politicians may be gearing up for November's presidential election, but the nation is in cynical mood, says John Carlin



Five Republicans who would be President



**Bob Dole** Second World War hero, a Republican leader in the Senate, has served in Congress for 35 years. A conservative Washington insider, he has taken instructions from the polls and joined the chorus denouncing the ineptitudes of "big government". Described as "Bob Dole" in a recent cartoon, he displays clarity only in his despair to win the presidency at the third and final time of asking.

**George W. Bush** He is a Texas oilman and a former congressman. He is a conservative and a member of the Christian right. He is a member of the "Moral Majority" and is a member of the "Newt Gingrich" group. He is a member of the "Pat Buchanan" group and is a member of the "John McCain" group.

**Mitt Romney** Former Governor of Massachusetts, he is a conservative and a member of the Christian right. He is a member of the "Moral Majority" and is a member of the "Newt Gingrich" group. He is a member of the "Pat Buchanan" group and is a member of the "John McCain" group.

**Pat Buchanan** Best known as a CNN talk-show host, he wrote speeches for President Reagan but suffers from an incapacity to leave the harshness of his rhetoric with the Old Gipper's velvet touch. Gay-basher who proposes building an iron curtain along the Mexican border, he scores populist points with his calls for protectionism, isolationism and jingoism. Too offensively radical to have any chance of winning.

**John McCain** He is a former Senator from Arizona and a member of the Christian right. He is a member of the "Moral Majority" and is a member of the "Newt Gingrich" group. He is a member of the "Pat Buchanan" group and is a member of the "George W. Bush" group.

THIS IS the serious stuff happening in America today: the middle classes, increasingly dependent on two incomes to sustain the material standards enjoyed by previous generations, do not rise in protest in response to the stagnation of their wages because they live in constant fear of losing their jobs. The Dow-Jones index breaks new records almost daily and Wall Street traders raise cheers at the news that national productivity is improving and that yet another company has "downsized" to cut costs. If there is a difference between the predicaments of Americans and Western Europeans, it is this: the gap between rich and poor in America is the widest in the industrialised world, and is becoming wider at a faster rate than anywhere else.

By way of compensation for the shortage of bread, one of the circus diversions on offer this year will be that old favourite, the race for the White House. Enjoyed mostly on television, the appeal of the presidential election contest derives from its capacity to combine the thrill of organised sport with the drama of the chat show. There was a hope that 1996 might see the injection of an elevating

third factor, something noble and visionary, but that faded with General Colin Powell's decision in November to put family before country.

The election spectacle will be conducted in two parts. First, the Republican candidates, a baleful lot described in one New York Times column as an appropriate cast for a film noir, will be tearing each other to pieces in television commercials in an attempt to secure their party's nomination. But the audience for this spectacle will not be making the networks rich. An indicator was provided by CNN in November. When the leading Republican candidates all appeared together for a debate on Larry King Live, only 800,000 households tuned in — fewer than those who watch reruns of Are you being served? on public television.

The chances that interest will perk up in part two of the election are reduced by the likelihood that Bob Dole will be the man to go head-to-head against President Clinton in the second half of the year. Mr. Dole has gravitas but no charm. Mr. Clinton has charm but no gravitas. This presents media commentators with a problem. What they will do

is strive to make up for the low quality of the drama by emphasising the intensity of the sport, by conveying a sense that, unexciting as the two candidates might be, they are evenly matched and sure to engage in a race to the finish.

If all this seems rather cynical, it has the merit of reflecting fairly faithfully the public mood. The Republicans won control of Congress for the first time in 40 years in November 1994 — not, as conservative commentators maintained at the time, because of an "ideological" shift in the American landscape but because, by campaigning against "Washington business as usual," they tapped into a rich vein of national disgust. The voters' hope was that honourable government would somehow translate into a stronger economy, higher wages and more secure jobs. The Republicans, however, have failed to temper the disgust and, having raised expectations so high, have succeeded only in deepening the cynicism.

They did not, for example, live up to their promise to address the question of campaign finance reform. So long as each senator finds himself having to raise \$6 million in order to be

elect, so long will law-making in America be an exercise disproportionately determined by moneyed special interests.

No more glaring example exists of the institutional corruption to which Washington politicians are prey. The zealous Republican "freshmen" realised this when they arrived on Capitol Hill a year ago. But now, having tasted power and discovered that it is far easier to raise money as an incumbent — because an elected legislator is in a far stronger position to provide favours and influence to wealthy donors than a would-be legislator — they have concurred with their seniors that the issue does not represent as high a priority as they had initially thought.

Which is one reason why last August, eight months into the Republican "revolution," a poll by a non-

partisan group called American Talks Issues found that 73 per cent of Americans persisted in believing that "politicians work for themselves and their own careers, not the people they represent." 81 per cent believed "government tax policies help large corporations and the wealthy more than average people."

Popular perceptions are supported by the evidence of the vast increase in donations to the Republican Party by the likes of Philip Morris, the tobacco giant, since the 1994 election. No bigger campaign donors exist than the corporations that run America's armaments industry: this might help explain why Congress resolved last year to award \$7 billion more in defence spending than the Pentagon had requested.

The government shut-

down that has straddled the old and new year has provided a fitting conclusion to the year of dashed hopes. The disagreement between the White House and Congress which precipitated the shut-down, keeping 280,000 federal workers away from work and thousands more without pay since Dec. 16, goes to the heart of the national debate unleashed by Newt Gingrich and his Republican foot-soldiers at the start of 1995.

Both Democrats and Republicans actually do start their arguments in the real world, from a recognition of the anxiety that is assailing the voting middle classes. But the manner in which the debate has been conducted has served not so much to provide remedies for economic malaise as to reinforce widespread dissatisfaction with the politicians in Washington.

The impression is created that ordinary people's economic concerns are viewed by the politicians, who spend heavily on focus groups to establish precisely what those concerns are, as simply the raw material with which to shape their electoral sales pitches.

One of the principal arguments test-marketed by the Republicans to the 1994 congressional election goes

like this: America will become prosperous and happy again if it can destroy "the liberal welfare state" (or, as Senator Phil Gramm puts it, "get people off the cart and start pulling with the rest of us") and balance the budget within a biblically resonant seven years. Mr. Clinton's Democrats, bereft of alternative plans of their own, merely disagree.

The likely winner in this particular game is Mr. Clinton. Simply by standing still, he has given the pleasingly presidential impression of defending the American people against yet another piece of congressional chicanery. Since the Republicans have defined balancing the federal budget as their most sacred and urgent task, it is hardly surprising that large sectors of the public should have viewed as sordid the Republicans' resolve to cut capital gains taxes — or grant rewards to their electoral benefactors — while proposing cuts in health care for the elderly and the abolition of benefits to single teenage mothers.

None of which bears any great relevance to the serious economic questions of the day, determined as they are not by governments but the uncertainties of the free market. Wall Street con-

tinues to be perky; the middle classes continue to fret, and America's poor continue to lead lives of deeper indignity and less hope than the unemployed of Britain, Germany or France. The only thing one can say about the American year in politics is that, for the moment, things do not look too good for whoever turns out to be the 1996 Republican presidential candidate.

While a year ago the conventional Washington wisdom was that Mr. Clinton was dead in the water, today he is the punters' favourite. He stands higher in the polls than at any point in the past two years, comfortably ahead of the Republicans in general and Mr. Dole in particular. However, three years ago the media were hailing the arrival of a new Democratic Era. A year ago it was the Republican Era. Eleven months from now, who knows what might happen?

And, now that the Republicans' revolutionary experiment is fizzling out and the two parties will resume their traditional battle for the soft American centre, who — apart from the interested parties themselves — cares?

*The Independent*

## Christopher's visit to region expected to be his most fruitful mission

**By Carol Giacomo**  
*Reuter*

WASHINGTON — With the outlines of an Israel-Syria deal apparently in sight, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher is due to embark this week on what could be one of his more fruitful Middle East peace missions.

He heads for Israel and Syria aiming to build on six days of U.S.-mediated negotiations that all sides said made unspecified progress towards what has been an elusive accord between the Jewish state and its arch Arab enemy.

U.S. officials played down prospects for a breakthrough on Mr. Christopher's 16th peace shuttle, which begins on Wednesday after a brief visit to Paris.

But the trip takes place amid remarkably upbeat predictions that the two sides are at long last showing serious interest in trying to reach a peace deal this year.

Hence, "There is heavy pressure (for Mr. Christopher's mission) to produce either an achievement in substance or a new form of

diplomatic engagement at a higher level" than last week's negotiations, said Robert Satloff, director of the Washington Institute for Near East Peace.

"There will be a sense of disappointment if, after the trip, neither goal is realised, he told Reuters.

Although not officially announced, Israeli officials said the talks that ended on Friday at a secluded venue in Washington, D.C. agreed negotiations would resume later this month after Mr. Christopher returns to Washington.

U.S. officials would say only that Mr. Christopher would bring proposals to Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres and Syrian President Hafez Al Assad when he met them separately in occupied Jerusalem on Wednesday and in Damascus on Thursday.

The secretary is seeking agreement on a format for future negotiations and to continue to bridge gaps on substantive differences, aides said.

Both Israel and Syria have shown new interest in peace since the November assassination of Israeli

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by an Israeli opponent of moves by the Jewish State to trade land for peace with Arabs.

Adding to the sense of urgency is that the United States and Israel both hold presidential elections later this year that could mean a change of leadership. Even if President Clinton is reelected, however, Mr. Christopher does not plan to serve another four-year term as secretary, aides say.

Although they announced no concrete substantive agreement when they ended three days of U.S.-mediated talks on Friday, Israeli and Syrian negotiators went out of their way to hail unspecified progress on key disputes between them.

Chief Israeli negotiator Uri Savir told CNN: "We can see the contours already of a possible peace treaty."

And on Israel television he said: "I have less doubt than before that the Syrians indeed are committed to arriving at a peace, a real peace as the Syrians define it."

Syrian negotiator Walid Al Mualeem, meanwhile, voiced the first official men-

tion by Damascus of the possibility of substantial progress in the four-year-old talks.

This was the first time in three tries that the two sides have had intensive discussions without reaching an impasse.

Nevertheless, Mr. Satloff said as far as he knows "there is no sign yet of substantive shift in any core Syrian demands that would trigger a breakthrough in the process."

The talks have been stuck over Syria's insistence on a full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights, and Israel's demands for normal relations and security arrangements.

But Mr. Satloff said these gaps can be bridged fairly easily. The real issue is whether President Assad is ready to make the strategic choice for peace.

Mr. Satloff sees Peres — in signalling greater flexibility in recent weeks — as having "called Assad's bluff" and now it is up to Damascus to take action. But he echoes other analysts in urging the United States to put more pressure on President Assad to do so.

## Bangladeshis fear elections won't end row

**By Anis Ahmed**  
*Reuter*

DHAKA — From the old woman selling rice cakes at the roadside, to Dhaka's elite crowding the capital's smart clubs, the talk is of next month's election and whether it will calm Bangladesh's political storms or usher in more turbulence.

"I hear there will be a vote again. People now go around my basti (slum), speak sweet words and beg for my vote. Maybe I will get some money too," said rice cake-seller Shaherjan Bannu, who has lived in a Dhaka slum for nearly 30 years.

She migrated to the city after a river swallowed her village home, and has voted in every election since Bangladesh won independence in 1971.

She did not approve of the 1988 elections, called by then President Hossain Mohammad Ershad, because most opposition groups stayed away.

That vote was followed by an eruption of violence in which hundreds died. What worries Bannu and many other Bangladeshis is that history may repeat itself.

As in 1988, the main opposition is boycotting this year's elections, due on Feb. 7.

"The current rulers are

just following suit. They are going to have another election without the mainstream opposition," said businessman Shamsul Huq.

"Our Prime Minister, Begum Khaleda Zia, is either unaware — or is trying to forget — that she came to power through the country's first fair election (in 1991) while her predecessor general Ershad stole power in a 1982 coup," he said.

Opposition parties refuse to take part unless Khaleda resigns and allows a neutral administration to supervise the polls.

But Khaleda refuses to quit, and as a result of the impasse, most Bangladeshis say the elections could be drenched with blood.

"Experience says such an election will result in sav-

age battles between rival groups," government official Manirul Islam said.

Adding to the danger, the country is awash with illegal arms. A police drive to retrieve them has not been a success.

"We are afraid that arms will play a dominant role in the coming vote," one police officer said. "They will be used by both groups — those who participate in the poll and those who want to foil it."

Also worrying is the outbreak of violence within the ranks of the ruling Bangladesh nationalist Party (BNP) over the choice of election candidates.

Activists from BNP groups that failed to get their nominees selected by Ms. Khaleda have attacked party rivals, erected road barricades and fought bat-

ties across the country in recent days.

"The in-fighting within the BNP could be more lethal than with opposition activists," one political analyst said.

Ms. Khaleda's main rival, opposition leader Sheikh Hasina, calls Khaleda a "neo-autocrat who has outmatched Ershad" and urges Bangladeshis to resist any election with her in power.

Ms. Khaleda says her opponents are unnerved by BNP's enormous popularity.

The last thing needed by Bangladesh — one of the world's poorest countries and regularly hit by natural disasters of huge proportions — is political deadlock.

And despite the bad omens, diplomats expect a last-minute move to try to stave off anarchy and step back from the brink, particularly as the economy is crying out for a period of political peace.

"The country was just taking off economically when the election dispute provoked strikes and unrest," one Asian diplomat said.

"But now, investors who appeared so intent on having a stake in Bangladesh are sitting back, watching events unfold from day to day."



Khaleda Zia



## Dubai reports 6% growth in 1995

DUBAI (AFP) — Dubai's economy grew by around six per cent in 1995 due to an upturn in the oil and non-oil sectors and it will record similar rates in the medium term, Al Khaleej newspaper reported Sunday.

The emirate's gross domestic product (GDP) stood at nearly 36.1 billion dirhams (\$9.83 billion) in 1995 compared with around 34.1 billion dirhams (\$9.29 billion) in 1994, the paper quoted Mohammad Al Abbar, director of the Dubai economy department, as saying.

The oil sector grew by 8.2 per cent to 7.4 billion dirhams (\$2.01 billion) from 6.9 billion dirhams (\$1.88 billion), he said. The other sectors grew by 5.4 per cent, contributing by 79.3 per cent to the GDP.

"All economic sectors performed well in 1995 and the GDP is expected to record similar growth rates in the medium run," Mr. Abbar said.

Dubai produces around 300,000 barrels per day of oil, nearly 15 per cent of total output of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Its GDP accounted for nearly a quarter of the UAE's GDP in 1994.

Like other Gulf oil producers, Dubai has sought to diversify its economy by setting up industrial projects and boosting trade. Its trade of around \$17 billion in 1994 exceeded one fifth of the Gulf's total non-oil trade.

Mr. Abbar said the inflation rate in Dubai, the second biggest UAE emirate, declined to around five per cent in 1995 from seven per cent in 1994. He attributed the drop mainly to a fall in rents.

Ruling out imposition of taxes, he said: "There are no plans to introduce taxes on income and profits. This will be shown in the coming 20-year development plan due to be announced in the next few weeks."

Meanwhile, the UAE is pinning hopes on offset programmes it introduced a few years ago in a bid to attract technology from its main arms suppliers, an official has said.

Mohammad Al Mazroui, projects director at the armed forces Offset Group, said the UAE had so far signed agreements for 17 development projects with key weapons makers from France and other Western countries.

"There are other offset ventures under study in different parts of the emirates," Mr. Mazroui told the local Al Bayan newspaper.

The programme is designed to develop the UAE's economy in the long-term, expand its industrial base and create job opportunities for citizens. Such projects will help us acquire technology and diversify the economy," he said.

The UAE joined Saudi Arabia in 1991 in introducing offset programmes, under which arms suppliers must reinvest in local enterprises that should produce up to 60 per cent of the weapons deal's value in 10 years.

Scores of countries enforce such a scheme as an instrument to attract investment from advanced states. It covers the military and civilian sectors in most of those countries but in the UAE it is confined to arms transactions.

Offset chief Amin Badrudin said late last year the UAE had identified projects worth nearly \$3 billion that could be awarded to foreign partners under offset schemes. They cover industry, farming and services.

Officials said in early 1995 they were setting up a company with the U.S. Chase Manhattan Bank with a capital of \$1 billion to oversee offset ventures. It would be owned jointly with the local private sector.

"We are trying to attract ventures that will spur sustainable growth and create a productive mechanism for the private sector," Mr. Mazroui said.

Like other Gulf oil producers, the UAE is striving to lessen reliance on volatile oil earnings by expanding its non-oil industries through setting up joint projects with foreign partners.

Although the oil sector's share of the gross domestic product has been halved to around 38 per cent, crude export revenues still account for more than 80 per cent of the total income.

The UAE's biggest offset package was struck with the French Giat Industries in 1993 under a multi-billion-dollar deal to supply the emirates with 436 Leclerc battle tanks.

Other offset partners include Aerospatiale of France and the Newport News shipbuilding company, Westinghouse and McDonnell Douglas of the United States.

## Israel cabinet approves \$419m spending cut

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel's cabinet approved spending cuts of 1.3 billion shekels (\$419 million) Sunday, just one week after the 1996 budget took effect, a treasury spokeswoman said.

But government ministers were unable to reach an agreement on where the cuts would be made and a meeting will be held next week to decide. The cuts also need parliamentary approval.

On Saturday night the treasury increased fuel prices by 15.1 per cent to raise an additional 750 million shekels (\$242 million).

"They are minimum steps, they are not an economic package, they are not things to shock the economy," Finance Minister Avraham Shohat said.

The measures are aimed at guaranteeing the government will meet its 1996 budget of 172.8 billion shekels (\$55.7 billion) and its deficit target

of 2.5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP).

The foreign currency and stock markets in recent weeks had expected some sort of economic package and hoped it would spur the central bank to lower interest rates, which would cause the shekel to weaken and boost exports.

The Bank of Israel in a statement said the measures were positive and should help reduce the current account

deficit in the balance of payments.

But it said it would have been preferable to reduce the deficit by bigger spending cuts rather than raising taxes.

The central bank did not indicate whether the measures were enough to provoke an interest rate reduction.

"Interest rates will be determined as usual based on a wide variety of figures and it is still too early to assess the picture. The Bank of Israel will continue to act in order to achieve the inflation target set by the government," the statement said.

The 1996 budget calls for tax collections to total 99.2 billion shekels (\$32 billion), a six per cent increase from 1995 and above estimated GDP growth of five per cent.

But the treasury overestimated receipts from a new health tax and also increased the defence ministry budget.

## Czechs seek to lure Arab Gulf investment, promote exports

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Czech Prime Minister Václav Klaus held talks with officials in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Sunday on a mission to promote exports and lure investments to support post-communist reforms, diplomats said.

Mr. Klaus met Sheikh Sultan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the UAE's deputy prime minister, and scores of local businessmen late Saturday and told them it was time to invest in his eastern European nation.

"The Czech economy grew by more than six per cent in the second half of 1995 following privatisations as part of the transfer to the free economy system," Mr. Klaus told businessmen at the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

He said new laws drafted as part of his country's post-communist reforms permitted a 100 per cent ownership by foreign investors in any project and free transfer of profits and capital.

Czech embassy officials said Mr. Klaus held talks in Dubai Sunday on opening a Czech trade centre to promote exports to the oil-rich region.

Dubai is the main transshipment centre in the Gulf, handling more than 20 per cent of its total non-oil trade. Its main reexport markets are Iran, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, India, Pakistan and other Asian countries.

The Abu Dhabi chamber provided no figures for trade between UAE and the Czech Republic but said the exchange was low.

"Trade between the UAE and the Czech Republic does not reflect the large potentials of the two countries," the chamber's chairman, Rahma Masud, said.

Mr. Klaus's talks with Sheikh Sultan focused on improving economic ties. The UAE minister said he hoped Mr. Klaus's visit would "boost trade, economic and industrial cooperation."

Embassy officials said Mr. Klaus would travel to Kuwait

Monday for a two-day visit before he flies back home. His talks would also cover economic links with Kuwait, one of the biggest Gulf overseas investors.

Arab Gulf states have been reluctant to invest in former Soviet Union and other ex-communist nations on the grounds of the political and economic mood remains uncertain in most of them.

But there have been calls for sending delegations to explore opportunities as part of a drive to diversify investment abroad.

The bulk of the more than \$400 billion owned by the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states in overseas funds is based in the West in real estate, bank deposits and stocks and securities.

The six members — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE — are also key markets for the West, which provides them with more than half their annual imports of around \$50 billion.

## Cuts in welfare system force Swedes to save in 1996

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — The Swedish welfare system, fiercely clung to by Swedes accustomed to cradle-to-grave government support, faces cuts as the new year rolls in, forcing Swedes to tighten the belt further in 1996.

Parents will be the first to notice the economic hardship, with the toughest cutbacks hitting child allowance and sick pay, even though Swedes will still have among the highest benefits in Europe.

Child allowance has been reduced from 750 kronor (\$114) per child per month to 640 kronor (\$97) for children born after Jan. 1, and additional benefits of up to 600 kronor (\$90) for families with more than two children have been abolished completely.

"It feels a little unfair that the government chooses to cut back on families, on those who need the money most," said 47-year old entrepreneur Anders Nyhlen, who has a six-year old daughter.

"The government should instead make benefits proportional to income, so those already struggling don't have such a hard time," he added.

The cuts are the result of an austerity programme by the ruling minority Social Democratic government aimed at cutting state spending by six billion kronor (\$909 million).

The Social Democrats, the founders of Sweden's welfare system, were forced to the tough budget moves to enable the country to clean up state finances and to help it meet the criteria for the European economic monetary union (EMU).

The party has dropped lost significant public support since the cuts were announced in April, as some party members feel the Social Democrats have abandoned their original party platform.

Sensing this, Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson said in a New Year's speech that the government would return to the traditional welfare system once finances improve.

Other cuts include those in sickness benefits, reduced from 80 to 75 per cent, while unemployment benefits have also been slashed from 80 to 75 per cent of what the unemployed last earned, up to a maximum of 564 kronor

(\$85) a day.

Parental leave pay for both mothers and fathers will be reduced from 85 to 75 per cent for 10 months, plus one month for each parent at 85 per cent of their salary. Fathers in Sweden must take at least one month's paternity leave.

Temporary time off to care for sick children under 12 will also be slashed from 85 to 75 per cent for a maximum of 120 days a year.

The cuts, already hinted at in 1994, are even having an effect on the number of Swedish births, according to figures from the Central Bureau of Statistics (SCB).

The number of births in 1995 dropped by 8,000 from a year earlier to 104,000, the largest drop since 1922. The decline, according to SCB, is due to the more social cutbacks.

Stricter qualifications also apply for unemployment insurance.

Those who leave their job "without valid reason" will lose unemployment benefits for 45 days instead of 20, and a worker fired for "unacceptable behaviour" will be shut out for 60 days. A jobless worker who refuses to take a job suited to him will be shut out for 80 days.

One consolation for Swedes is a reduction in tax on food items from 21 to 12 per cent as of the new year. And several financial support programmes have also been instituted to encourage people under the age of 35 to begin farming.



U.S. President Bill Clinton speaks to reporters in the White House's Oval Office after signing the continuing resolution to reopen all government services through Jan.

26. Standing in the background are Senate minority leader Tom Daschle (left), Vice President Al Gore and House majority leader Richard Gephardt (AFP photo)

## U.S. forms trade unit, signals 'vigorous' enforcement

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The U.S. Trade Representative's (USTR) office has announced the creation of a new enforcement unit, saying it would "vigorously monitor" trade agreements to ensure trading partners are living up to the pacts.

"The most important part of our job is what happens after we sign a trade agreement," Trade Representative Mickey Kantor said.

"I want to give ample notice to foreign governments who are not living up to the obligations that we will not tolerate — not tolerate — a failure to honour agreements, or the violation of U.S. trade laws," he stressed.

A USTR statement said the office was created because "it is essential that we continue to vigorously monitor and enforce (existing) trade agreements... in order to make the most of the opportunities they provide."

The unit will coordinate disputes over compliance with trade agreements with the World Trade Organisation, North American Free Trade Agreement and other pacts, the statement said.

"We must ensure the agreements are more than empty promises or cosmetic," Mr. Kantor said.

Mr. Kantor said the enforcement group would monitor specific agreements with South Korea, China, Turkey, Japan, Canada, Australia and the European Union.

Some reports suggested the new unit was an election-year gimmick to show the administration of President Bill Clinton was tough on trade.

But Mr. Kantor said it is aimed at protecting "real jobs, real people, and real economic activity" at a time

when the United States and other nations are becoming increasingly dependent on international trade.

"Trade has gone from 13 per cent of our GDP in 1970 to what I mentioned before: 31 per cent at the end of this year," he said.

"It will be \$2.1 trillion in 1995. Our exports alone will approach almost — and in goods alone — almost \$600 billion. When we came to office, they were about \$420 billion. That is a huge growth," he explained.

Mr. Kantor said the new unit would examine the possibility of initiating a case of the World Trade Organisation to ensure that South Korea lives up to an agreement on sanitary and shelf-life standards.

Mr. Kantor said it will also seek to ensure that Japan, South Korea, Australia, Turkey and others protect U.S. sound recordings and other intellectual property.

The trade representative also said the office would "make sure that China holds the circumvention of U.S. laws with regard to textiles and apparel."

He added that Canada would be monitored for discriminatory practices against U.S. magazines and the European Union for compliance with a recent agreement on tariffs on grains and rice.

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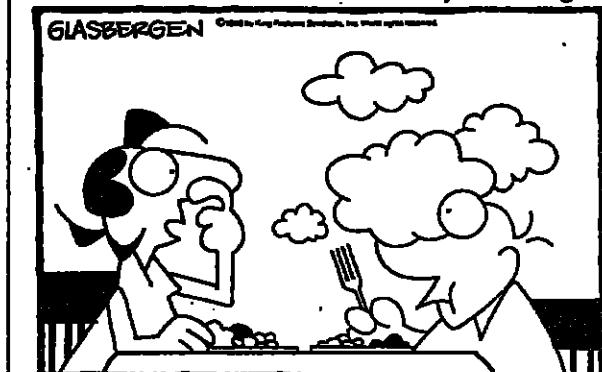
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## THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen

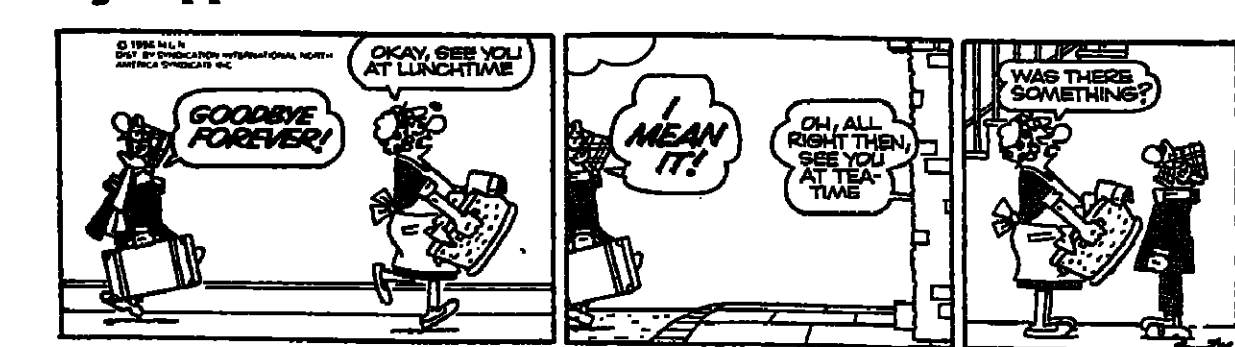


"It's a special Diet Fork with a speedometer. If you eat too fast, a stink bomb goes off!"

## Peanuts



## Andy Capp



## Mutt'n'Jeff



## Crosswords not received

## HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 1996

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Find out what your family desires and help them to gain their goals. Later, do whatever will improve your own talents.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Get into career activities early today and make real progress during the daytime hours. Be happy at home this evening.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Study new outlets which can be more lucrative, and then go to the right sources for the information you need on a new project.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Get up early and improve your appearance for you to be prosperous in your career. Study your practical goals and how to achieve them.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Study into that new plan which help you to gain your aims more quickly and easily and then discuss it with higher-ups.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Be more inventive in going after your aims and they are more easily attained. Take it easy tonight with your mate and love ones.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Contact someone who can give you the support, and later tonight join them in some social or let. State your ambition clearly.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You can understand at this time how to get ahead faster through new activities and outlet. You will gain prestige this evening.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Try to appreciate your mate's qualities today and then let this evening you can hand your best interest more efficiently.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Get idea operating which will improve your public image toward being successful. The event later today can be fun with your loved one.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Study information which can help you improve routines in the morning today, and later tonight get your outside contacts improved.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Plan time today have fun during spare moments. Take your mate out on a new, charming place and add some spark to your romance.

Birthstone of January: Garnet, Rose Quartz



# Prospects bleak for Europe's oil refiners

LONDON (R) — A recession in Europe's oil refining business is unlikely to improve in 1996 because massive capacity expansion in Asia will remove an important export outlet for Europe's excess production, industry analysts say.

The biggest losses in over a decade have prompted calls for a cartel-style capacity cut in Europe as a quick fix, but analysts believe the return to profit will be slow and painful.

"Europe relies on the rest of the world for an improvement in margins. I don't see that happening in 1996 unless we shut capacity," B.P. Oil Europe's business analyst Jean-Philippe Marq told Reuters.

Mr. Marq said over half of Europe's refineries lost

money in 1995 on an average profit margin of \$1.50 per barrel, before fixed costs, for a typical northern European refinery.

He expected margins to rise by a few cents in 1996, but did not think they would reach 1994's level of \$1.90 per barrel.

Natwest Securities oil analyst Simon Flowers thought the recovery could happen quicker than that.

In a recent report, he said low returns and the prospect of widespread plant closure in Europe "gives a high potential for a recovery in downstream profitability to offset the cyclical decline in chemicals in 1996-1997."

By contrast, Mr. Marq and others expect Asia's growing capacity to cut into European earnings before

Europe faces up to its problem.

South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand are expected to build about 1.3 million barrels per day (b/d) of new capacity by 1997. Europe produces about 800,000 b/d more than it consumes and normally exports large amounts of gas oil, used for heating, to Asia. European refiners also sell significant volumes of motor gasoline to the United States.

An early cold snap in Europe and the United States this winter has boosted the gas oil market over the past few weeks, but Mr. Marq expects it to remain structurally depressed this year.

"Southern Europe... is the marginal supplier of gas oil to the Far East and northern Europe is long (has ample) gasoline — its margin de-

pends on the U.S. market," he said.

"If these markets are not strong, and we are worried about the Far East, it's difficult to see a margin improvement in 1996," he added.

Some companies have tried to accelerate the mothballing of uneconomic plant, calling for industry-wide action to share the pain of de-commissioning and redundancy.

"I have indicated that we would be ready, on a regional basis, to see whether there can be coordinated decision in the industry that will allow a reduction of refining capacity," Total S.A. Chairman Thierry Desmarest told Reuters in July.

But most analysts say any cartel-style move of this sort is very unlikely because it is banned by competition laws

in article 85 of Europe's founding Treaty of Rome.

Oil bosses would have to persuade the European Commission that consumers would benefit from an orchestrated move to hike prices. Jeremy Hudson, oil analyst at Salomon Brothers, believes that unilateral closure and bilateral cooperation is how companies will resolve the problem.

He compares the oil "crisis" to a similar situation in the petrochemical industry a few years ago. In the end, companies unilaterally closed plant and rationalised production.

A cyclical upturn in 1994 in the petrochemical sector has saved many oil company earnings figures in 1995, and may end up doing the same in 1996.

## Western Europe to remain a favourite U.S. investment target

PARIS (AFP) — Western Europe will remain the leading foreign investment market for big U.S. companies in the coming five years, even though numerous American business leaders will have turned to Asia by the year 2000, according to a report by auditing and consulting firm Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu.

The report, based on interviews with about 100 large U.S. companies, shows that the interest in Asia, to which many firms are drawn by cheaper labour and government subsidies, should not hurt U.S. investment in western Europe.

Actually, some 55 per cent of American companies selling abroad expect increased sales in Europe in the coming five years. Their investments are increasing in France, Germany, Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands and Italy, a change from the traditional tendency to invest in the U.K.

Having customers nearby and availability of skilled workers locally are two major criteria in choosing investment locations, the study shows. But companies are starting to take increasing interest in telecommunications and land transportation infrastructures, and are focusing less on tax advantages and on language considerations.

U.S. foreign investment has traditionally focused on the U.K. more than any other country, due to cultural relationships and U.K. economic stability. But American investors have been moving into less familiar European markets.

U.S. investment in the U.K. will still head the western European list in the coming five years, and France will be second, the report shows. That country has \$23 billion or 11.5 per cent of the U.S. investments in western Europe totalling \$200 billion.

France is appreciated due to its central location, well-trained and relatively reasonably priced labour, and a strong financial situation.

## DAILY BUSINESS BEAT

A review of news from the Arabic press

### Income Tax Department distributing 1995 self-assessment forms

★ THE INCOME Tax Department is currently distributing the 1995 self-assessment forms, in accordance with the new amendments to the income tax law, to all taxpayers throughout the Kingdom. The department said that by filling the form and presenting it before the end of this month would enable the taxpayers to win a six per cent "encouragement discount" of the tax amount if it is paid before the end of January 1996. According to the new amendments, the partial exemption is half the total income and not 25 per cent as in past years. Personal exemption was raised from JD 400 to JD 1,000 and the exemption for the wife was increased from JD 200 to JD 1,500. Each child was given JD 500 in tax exemption instead of JD 200 and for university education the exemption has become JD 1,500 instead of JD 1,000. Those who support their mothers and sisters can take out JD 500 and JD 200 in exemptions instead of JD 200 and JD 100 for each sister respectively. As for tenants, the exemption under the new amendment is for the full rent paid and not 50 per cent of it as in the past. Deductions of social security or pension fund and health insurance remain unchanged as they are exempted in full (Al Rai').

### Islamic bank extends JD 10m credit to Jordan Cement Factories Company

★ THE JORDAN Islamic Bank for Finance and Investment will be extending a JD 10 million credit to the Jordan Cement Factories Company under an agreement signed between the two parties. The credit, under the terms of murabaha, or profit-sharing, will finance the purchase of necessary equipment to enable the company face the increased local and international demand for cement. The credit is considered of a medium-term nature that the bank extends to both the public and private sectors to serve economic development (Al Dustour).

### Arab Bank employees want overtime pay for working more than six hours a day

★ ARAB BANK employees are asking the management to honour its promises to approve the cost of living allowances and to provide a life insurance policy for the workers. In addition, the employees are demanding to be paid overtime based on a ruling by the Industrial Court that considered working hours at banks to be only six hours. As such, the management ought to count evening working hours as overtime payable at a rate of an hour and a quarter for every one hour of extra work, a memorandum sent to the management by a follow-up employees' committee said (Al Rai').

### Government rushes to help Tafleeh municipality

★ THE FINANCIAL straits suffered by the Municipality of Tafleeh over the weekend should be solved by now as the government was supposed to provide the municipality with sufficient funds to settle dues to people whose lands were appropriated by the authorities there but were not given the financial compensation. The First Instance Court in Tafleeh has ordered that all funds and assets of the municipality be seized for not paying the overdue compensations which amounted to JD 68,000. The court was to order another order to seize assets for not settling payments for light bulbs purchased for JD 14,000. Among the municipality assets which were to be seized were the mayor's car and the garbage trucks (Al Rai').

| AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET                                  |                      |               |                             |                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 07/01/1996 |                      |               |                             |                        |
| COMPANY'S NAME                                          | NO. OF SHARES TRADED | VALUE TRADED  | PREV. CLOSING PRICE         | CLOSING PRICE          |
| JORDAN NATIONAL BANK                                    | 1918                 | 9280          | 231.500                     | 232.000                |
| BANK OF JORDAN                                          | 3500                 | 8532          | 4.500                       | 4.450                  |
| MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK                             | 1350                 | 13125         | 3.750                       | 3.750                  |
| INVESTMENT DEVELOPMENT BANK                             | 250                  | 1620          | 2.200                       | 2.200                  |
| THE HOUSING BANK                                        | 546                  | 630           | 2.520                       | 2.520                  |
| JORDAN KUMAT BANK                                       | 6026                 | 4462          | 4.720                       | 4.700                  |
| JORDAN CUL BANK                                         | 9100                 | 16991         | 2.840                       | 2.820                  |
| JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK                        | 11200                | 8432          | 1.980                       | 1.980                  |
| JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT                              | 41440                | 3720          | 3.720                       | 3.700                  |
| PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK                            | 2852                 | 5265          | 1.900                       | 1.900                  |
|                                                         |                      | 4266          | 1.460                       | 1.430                  |
| <b>BANKS SECTOR</b>                                     | <b>49238</b>         | <b>115475</b> | <b>INDEX NUMBER: 235.10</b> | <b>CHANGE: -10.044</b> |
| JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER                                | 21450                | 36894         | 1.720                       | 1.720                  |
| JORDAN HOTEL & TOURISM                                  | 722                  | 5582          | 8.900                       | 9.000                  |
| NATIONAL PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT                           | 450                  | 790           | 1.760                       | 1.760                  |
| UNITED MIDDLE E.S.C. & COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS               | 750                  | 1635          | 2.200                       | 2.180                  |
| ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION                  | 5000                 | 1745          | 3.440                       | 3.440                  |
| ZARFA PRIVATE UNIVERSITY                                | 441                  | 828           | 1.200                       | 1.200                  |
| UNITED CO. FOR ORGANIZING LAND TRANS.                   | 1250                 | 2785          | 2.260                       | 2.230                  |
| INTON LAND DEVELOPMENT CORP.                            | 250                  | 260           | 1.090                       | 1.040                  |
| <b>SERVICES SECTOR</b>                                  | <b>30321</b>         | <b>46641</b>  | <b>INDEX NUMBER: 229.10</b> | <b>CHANGE: -0.371</b>  |
| ATTACHED CONC. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING                   | 2000                 | 2400          | 1.200                       | 1.200                  |
| THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES                             | 2600                 | 9412          | 3.620                       | 3.620                  |
| JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES                                  | 500                  | 1595          | 3.240                       | 3.260                  |
| THE ARAB POSTAGE                                        | 5435                 | 28801         | 5.370                       | 5.300                  |
| JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY                               | 1974                 | 19927         | 10.040                      | 10.150                 |
| THE JORDAN WOODEN NILES                                 | 740                  | 9559          | 7.960                       | 7.950                  |
| ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING                       | 1600                 | 6901          | 4.380                       | 4.210                  |
| DAR AL DAWA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT                    | 150                  | 1130          | 7.650                       | 7.900                  |
| ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRY                                  | 300                  | 1560          | 5.200                       | 5.200                  |
| LIVESTOCK & POULTRY                                     | 10850                | 6293          | .590                        | .580                   |
| ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING                         | 250                  | 393           | 1.420                       | 1.420                  |
| NATIONAL INDUSTRIES                                     | 3800                 | 3800          | 1.030                       | 1.010                  |
| INTEGRATED PETRO CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES                    | 4950                 | 6424          | 1.680                       | 1.640                  |
| NATIONAL CEMENT & WIRE MANUFACTURING                    | 550                  | 2436          | 3.900                       | 3.750                  |
| FAHREH INVESTMENT                                       | 300                  | 463           | 1.550                       | 1.540                  |
| UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES                             | 25000                | 80266         | 3.160                       | 3.180                  |
| JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.                         | 2750                 | 5440          | 1.980                       | 1.980                  |
| JORDAN NEW CABLE COMPANY                                | 3950                 | 5493          | 1.400                       | 1.390                  |
| E-TAY READY WEAR MANUFACTURING CO.                      | 7100                 | 15890         | 2.220                       | 2.260                  |
| INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO & CIGARETTES                      | 7250                 | 9893          | 1.380                       | 1.360                  |
| UNION CHEMICAL & VEGETABLE OIL INDUSTRY                 | 1600                 | 7580          | 1.620                       | 1.620                  |
| <b>INDUSTRIAL SECTOR</b>                                | <b>83.44</b>         | <b>216755</b> | <b>INDEX NUMBER: 120.91</b> | <b>CHANGE: -0.987</b>  |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>                                      | <b>156610</b>        | <b>398871</b> | <b>INDEX NUMBER: 153.04</b> | <b>CHANGE: -0.421</b>  |
| NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET                 |                      | 71269         |                             |                        |
| VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET                         |                      | 63409         |                             |                        |

**Financial  
Markets**

**Jordan Times**  
in co-operation with  
**Cairo Amman Bank**

**New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar**

| Currency        | Friday<br>Dec. 29 - 1995<br>Close | Friday<br>Jan. 5 - 1996<br>Close | Percent<br>Change |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Sterling Pound* | 1.5515                            | 1.5525                           | 0.06 %            |
| Deutsche Mark   | 1.4365                            | 1.4395                           | (0.21) %          |
| Swiss Franc     | 1.1535                            | 1.1615                           | (0.69) %          |
| French Franc    | 4.9065                            | 4.9265                           | (0.41) %          |
| Japanese Yen    | 103.40                            | 105.35                           | (1.95) %          |

\* USD Per STG

**Euro-Currency Interest Rates\***

| Currency       | Dec. 29 - 1995<br>1-Month (%) | 1-Year (%) | Jan. 7 - 1996<br>1-Month (%) | 1-Year (%) |
|----------------|-------------------------------|------------|------------------------------|------------|
| U.S. Dollar    | 5.71                          | 5.27       | 5.63                         | 5.23       |
| Sterling Pound | 6.43                          | 6.25       | 6.43                         | 6.32       |
| Deutsche Mark  | 3.76                          | 3.49       | 3.76                         | 3.50       |
| Swiss Franc    | 1.68                          | 1.68       | 1.75                         | 1.68       |
| French Franc   | 4.78                          | 4.90       | 4.75                         | 4.56       |
| Japanese Yen   | 0.25                          | 0.37       | 0.27                         | 0.50       |

Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent

**Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin**

Date:

January 7, 1996

| Currency       | Bid    | Offer  |
|----------------|--------|--------|
| U.S. Dollar    | 0.7080 | 0.7100 |
| Sterling Pound | 1.0495 | 1.0500 |
| Deutsche Mark  | 0.2911 | 0.2936 |
| Swiss Franc    | 0.6102 | 0.6133 |
| French Franc   | 0.1439 | 0.1446 |
| Japanese Yen*  | 0.0070 | 0.0075 |
| Dutch Guilder  | 0.1356 | 0.1410 |
| Swedish Krona  | -      | -      |
| Italian Lira*  | 0.0047 | 0.0049 |
| Belgian Franc  | -      | -      |

\* Per 100

## JORDAN MARKETPLACE

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### Foreign Exchange Market Summary (January 2-January 5, 1996)

AMMAN — The U.S. unit appreciated noticeably against the yen and marginally against the mark last week, while stabilising against sterling. It ended the week 1.85 per cent higher against the yen and 0.21 per cent higher against the mark.

While New York closed on an official holiday Monday, the dollar appreciated against the mark and the yen Tuesday, while depreciating slightly against sterling. Reports indicated that the dollar had surged against the yen during trading hours to reach a level of 103.89 yen. The yen's decline came as many traders switched their long yen positions into high yield European currencies. Rumours that Japanese firms were selling less dollars than expected, also supported the dollar against the yen. In the meantime, the dollar's appreciation against the mark came on the back of the mark weakness against other European currencies.

The U.S. unit rose against other major currencies Wednesday. The dollar was reported to have appreciated against the yen, to close at a level of 104.95 yen, for the first time in 18 months. Analysts linked the dollar's rise to continuing liquidation of long yen positions. The dollar also gained against the yen as many foreign investors, who own Japanese stocks, sold the yen against the dollar to hedge against a substantial drop in the Japanese yen.

The U.S. unit witnessed modest losses against the mark Thursday, while appreciating against the yen and stabilising against sterling. The dollar rose against the mark and the yen during trading hours, to reach a level of 1.4583 marks and 106.55 yen, following traders' reaction to comments by an unnamed U.S. Treasury official, who said that the dollar had room to appreciate further against the yen. But failure to reach an agreement to reopen federal government operations, as part of the on-going U.S. budget negotiations, in addition to profit-taking, limited the dollar's rise.

The dollar continued to rise against the yen at the end of the week, while retreating against the mark and sterling. Reports indicated that an agreement between Congress and the U.S. administration to allow the return of about 780 thousands government employees and restore funding for some agencies, contributed to the dollar's rise against the yen and limited its losses against the mark. Analysts indicated that although an agreement to end a partial government shutdown was reached, the U.S. budget crisis remained intact. Others also indicated that if the debate between Congress and the U.S. administration continued much longer, safe haven demand for Deutschmarks and Swiss francs may materialise.

Uncertainty over the fate of Italian Prime Minister Lamberto Dini was also cited as a major factor that contributed to the mark's rise against the dollar. The U.S. unit, thus, ended the week at 1.4395 marks, 105.33 yen and at \$1.5525 to the pound.



## Olajuwon leads Rockets past Pacers

HOUSTON (R) — Hakeem Olajuwon had 22 points and 15 rebounds and Mario Elie scored 11 of his 16 points in a key run that opened the fourth quarter as the Houston Rockets cruised to a 99-87 victory over the Indiana Pacers on Saturday.

Reggie Miller and Rik Smits scored 14 points apiece for the Pacers.

"We shot very poorly, but they had a lot to do with that," Pacers coach Larry Brown said. "Hakeem was everywhere, rebounding, blocking shots."

In Detroit, Allan Houston scored 10 of his 25 points in the third quarter and the Detroit Pistons allowed just seven points in the first 10:41 of the second half in a 90-82 victory over the Washington Bullets.

Grant Hill had 25 points, 12 rebounds and seven assists and Otis Thorpe added 22 points and 13 rebounds for Detroit.

"The way we finished this game was an absolute disgrace," Pistons coach Doug Collins said. "Because of them (the bench), Grant has to play 41 minutes with a tight back. Otis has to play 39 minutes and Allan 40."

"All I ask them to do was defend and move the ball. They didn't even have to score since we were so far ahead, but they couldn't even do that."

In Charlotte, Dell Curry scored 21 points in his first start after 357 straight games as a reserve to lead the Charlotte Hornets to a 96-90 victory over the Atlanta Hawks.

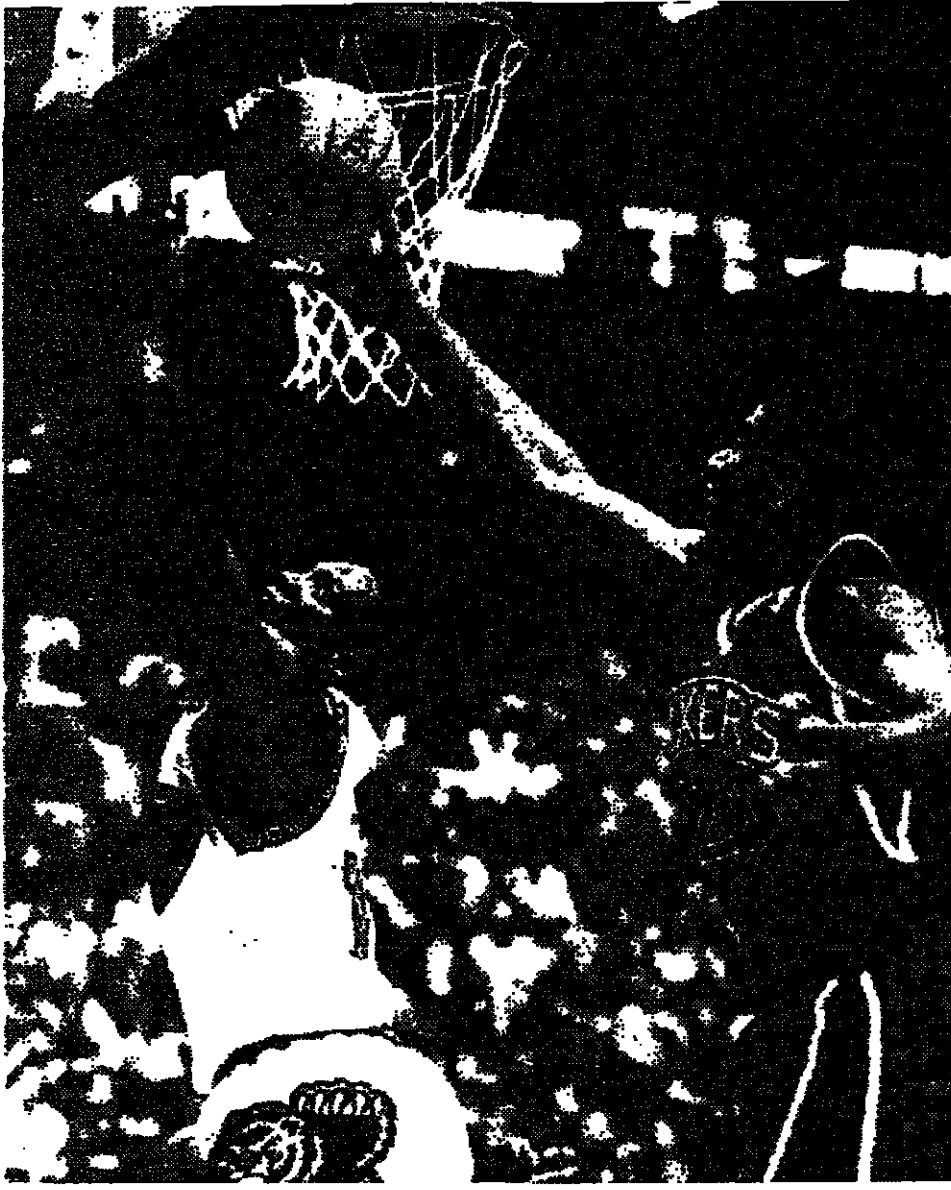
Charlotte snapped a 71-71 tie early in the fourth quarter with seven consecutive points, including the final five by Curry, who won the NBA's sixth man award for the 1993-94 season.

Glen Rice scored 21 points and Kendall Gill added 17 for the Hornets.

Mookie Blaylock scored 22 points and Grant Long and Andrew Lang tallied 16 points apiece for Atlanta.

In Chicago, Michael Jordan scored 32 points and Scottie Pippen 20 as the Chicago Bulls breezed to their 24th consecutive home victory, a 113-84 rout of the Milwaukee Bucks.

Pippen added 12 rebounds and six assists and Dennis Rodman grabbed 16 boards for Chicago, which won its



Philadelphia 76ers' Derrick Alston (right) period of their NBA game in Vancouver (Reuters photo)

18th of 19 games.

Glen Robinson scored 23 points and Vin Baker added 18 and 12 rebounds for Milwaukee.

In Cleveland, Chris Mills scored eight of his 23 points in a second-quarter run as the Cleveland Cavaliers took advantage of the absence of Shaquille O'Neal and defeated the Orlando Magic, 105-94.

Charlotte snapped a 71-71 tie early in the fourth quarter with seven consecutive points, including the final five by Curry, who won the NBA's sixth man award for the 1993-94 season.

### NBA RESULTS

|            |     |              |     |
|------------|-----|--------------|-----|
| Charlotte  | 96  | Atlanta      | 90  |
| Cleveland  | 105 | Orlando      | 94  |
| Detroit    | 90  | Washington   | 82  |
| Chicago    | 113 | Milwaukee    | 84  |
| Houston    | 99  | Indiana      | 87  |
| Miami      | 88  | Denver       | 86  |
| Sacramento | 115 | Golden State | 106 |

Cleveland has won 17 of 23 games since starting the season with seven losses.

Dennis Scott scored 27 points and Penny Hardaway added 23 for the Magic.

In Denver, Alonzo Mourning, playing his first game in nearly a month, scored five of his 30 points in the final 2:04 to lift the Miami Heat past the Denver Nuggets, 88-86, and spoil the return of

Lapson Ellis.

Billy Owens added 20 points for Miami.

Dale Ellis and Bryant Stith had 16 points apiece and Mahmoud Abdul Rauf added 15 for Denver.

In Sacramento, Walt Williams scored seven of his 27 points in the final three minutes and Mitch Richmond added 23 as the Sacramento Kings held off a late rally by the Golden State Warriors for their fourth consecutive victory, 115-106.

Olden Polynice and Brian Grant scored 22 points apiece for Sacramento.

Joe Smith scored 22 points and Ronny Seikaly and Chris Mullin added 18 apiece for Golden State.

## Moroccan upsets top seed Muster

DOHA (R) — Morocco's Younes Al-Aynaoui defeated French Open champion Thomas Muster 6-4 6-4 in 69 minutes in the semifinals of the Qatar Open on Saturday.

The 110th-ranked Moroccan will meet Petr Korda of the Czech Republic in Sunday's final of the \$635,000 tournament, leaving the beaten Muster in disgruntled mood.

"I lost to someone who played better on the day ... if he doesn't serve well, he doesn't have a game," said the Austrian, the only seed left in the tournament.

"I had a slight ankle injury this week, but that's not an excuse."

Aynaoui made no secret of his feelings towards the Austrian or play down his victory. "He is not a very friend-

ly guy. I don't think he has many friends on the tour."

"I played better and faster. I controlled the game and made the points. I don't think he was badly injured," added Aynaoui.

Wild card Aynaoui, backed by a large Arab crowd and watched by Britain's Duchess of York, slammed 12 aces to Muster's none. So far, Aynaoui has dropped only

one service game in the tournament.

Earlier in the day, Korda beat David Prinosil of Germany 6-7 (4-7) 6-1 6-3, blaming his racket for dropping the first set.

"I was getting very mad with it. It was like a trampoline. If I could find the string, I'd shoot him," said Korda after reaching his first final since May 1994.

## Packers upset 49ers in NFC playoff

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — The Green Bay Packers, behind Brett Favre's 299 passing yards, upset defending Super Bowl champion San Francisco 49ers 27-17 in an NFC divisional playoff game on Saturday.

The Packers, who will face the winner of Sunday's game between the Dallas Cowboys and the Philadelphia Eagles, made their biggest advance in the post season since 1967.

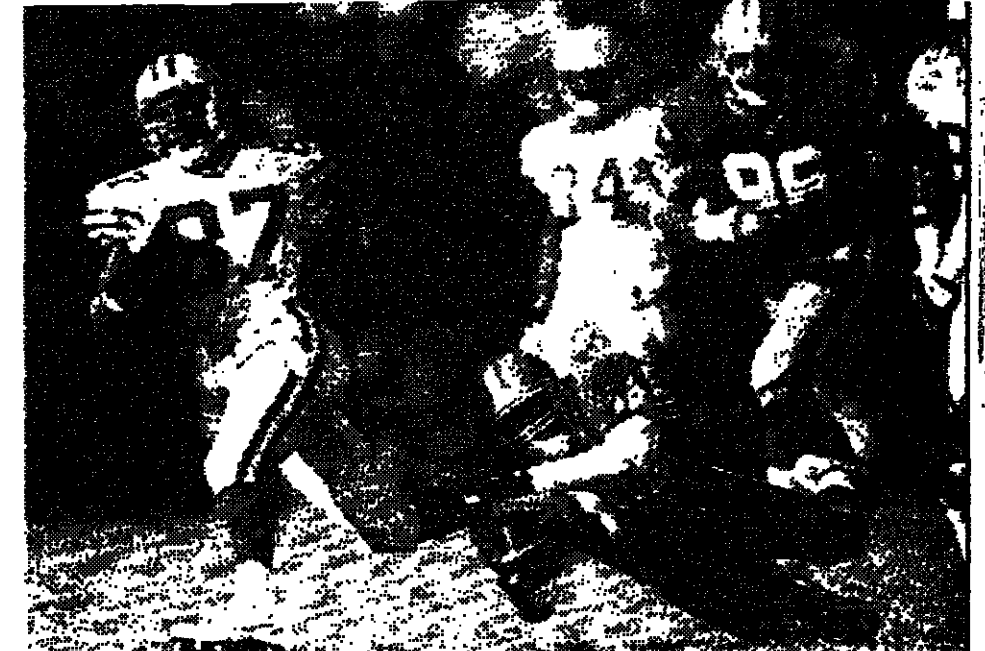
The 49ers lost in the divisional playoffs for the first time since 1988.

"I was worried right until the last minute. You never know," said Packers' coach, Mike Holmgren, a former assistant coach for the 49ers and a San Francisco native. "We beat a great champion."

The Packers (12-6) consumed more than seven minutes of the clock on the opening possession of the game. But a 44-yard field goal attempt by Chris Jacke was partially blocked by Tim McDonald.

On the next play, linebacker Wayne Simmons jarred the ball loose from fullback Adam Walker. Rookie cornerback Craig Newsome picked up the loose ball and raced down the left sideline for a touchdown to make it 7-0.

On the Packers' next possession, Favre (21-of-28) threw a 35-yard pass to tight end Keith Jackson over the middle and followed with a



Green Bay Packers wide receiver Robert Brooks (left) breaks free from San Francisco 49ers safety Tim McDonald as he heads for a 53-yard gain in the second quarter of the NFC Divisional Playoff game in San Francisco (Reuters photo)

20-yarder to Robert Brooks along the right sideline to the 3. Jackson caught a pass in the end zone to increase the lead to 14-0 with 4:13 left in the quarter.

Jackson caught four passes for 101 yards, and Brooks added 103 yards on four grabs. Edgar Bennett paced the Green Bay rushing attack with 51 yards on 23 carries.

Green Bay made it 21-0 on a 13-yard scoring pass from Favre to pro bowl tight end Mark Chumura in the second quarter.

The Niners (11-6) had first-and-goal at the Packers 5 late in the half. Steve Young threw two incomplete passes and ran to the 3 before San Francisco settled for a 21-yard field goal by Jeff Wilkins.

San Francisco finally got into the end zone with 7:46 left in the third quarter, cutting the deficit to 21-10 when

Young scored on a one-yard plunge on fourth-and-goal to top a 14-play, 80-yard drive.

After the teams traded punts, Favre, who was 21-of-25 for 299 yard through the first three quarters, drove Green Bay back downfield to set up a 27-yard field goal by Jacke that gave the Packers a 24-10 edge with 17 seconds left in the third quarter.

San Francisco's best chance to get back into the game was halted by rookie defensive tackle Darius Holland, who stripped young of the ball and recovered on the Niners 38, setting up a 26-yard field goal by Jacke with 7:01 left.

Derek Loville carried two yards for a score on third-and-goal with 50 seconds left for the final 49er score.

"Brett Favre made it all happen, and Keith Jackson contributed in the big game as we hoped when we traded

for him," Holmgren said. "My wife was so nervous about this game and going home to San Francisco she didn't come."

Favre said: "This is great. We are one game from the super bowl. I played well and we usually win when I do my job."

"The pack is back and we will try to make all those great Packers of the past proud."

San Francisco quarterback Steve Young, who set a playoff record for number of passes attempted at 65 with 32 completions for 328 yards, said: "They got ahead by three touchdowns real quick and we were forced out of our game plan. They knew we were throwing. The field was wet in some place and that hurt."

"I give them credit, they stopped us. We had time to get back but couldn't do it."

## Pittsburgh advance in AFC playoffs

PITTSBURGH (R) — Bam Morris ran for 106 yards and two touchdowns and Norm Johnson kicked four field goals to lead the Pittsburgh Steelers to a 40-21 victory over the Buffalo Bills in an AFC divisional playoff game on Saturday.

The Steelers (12-5) racked up 401 yards on offense in their biggest post-season scoring binge in 20 years.

The Steelers advanced to their second straight AFC Championship game and will play the winner of the game between Indianapolis and Kansas City.

The Bills (11-7) were hampered by the absence of star defensive end Bruce Smith, who did not even make the trip to Pittsburgh because of a severe case of influenza.

Morris, who carried 25 times, had touchdown runs of 13 and two yards, after the Steelers had cut the lead to 26-21 early in the fourth quarter on a nine-yard touchdown pass from Jim Kelly to Thurman Thomas.

"Obviously, it's a great win for us," said Pittsburgh coach Bill Cowher. We made it interesting by letting Buffalo back in the game after Pittsburgh had a 23-7 lead at the half.

"I don't think what happened last year (losing in the AFC title game to San Diego) will happen again. This team responds to situations. When we needed to move the ball in the fourth quarter because Buffalo had fought back to 26-21 we didn't panic, we just got it done. We are a better team than last year, we have been there before and we have more maturity."

Kelly spread the blame around for the defeat. "Their defense was tough and we didn't play that well, but I blame the officials. We couldn't hear some of the time, and a lot of things went on out there," Kelly said. "The crowd and the Steelers loaded up on us."

Steelers quarterback Neil O'Donnell completed 19-of-35 passes for 262 yards, including a pass to Ernie Mills 42 seconds into the second quarter that gave Pittsburgh

a 14-0 edge. Mills appeared to be out of the end zone when he caught the ball, but the officials ruled he was pushed out.

The Bills drove to the Pittsburgh 21 on their first possession, but Darick Holmes was caught by safety Carnell Lake for a 13-yard loss and Steve Christie missed a 52-yard field goal.

Pittsburgh then marched downfield with Morris carrying seven times for 40 yards on the 10-play drive that ended with the touchdown by Mills.

Johnson added field goals

of 45, 38 and 34 in the second quarter as the Steelers built a 23-7 halftime lead.

An interception by Cornell Lake set up a 39-yard field goal by Johnson midway through the third quarter.

After Kelly injured his shoulder late in the third quarter, Alex van Pelt moved the Bills downfield for a touchdown to make it 26-14 at the end of three quarters.

Tasker went 40 yards on an end around to the three-yard line and Van Pelt threw a three-yard scoring strike to Tony Cline with 3:27 left in the quarter.

Johnson added field goals

## Guinea turn down Cup slot

CONAKRY (AFP) — Guinea, who were announced as replacements for Nigeria in the Africa Nations Cup finals, said on Saturday night that they would not be taking part in the tournament.

The Confederation of African Football (CAF) had said in Cairo earlier on Saturday that Nigeria, who refused to take part in South Africa because they feared for their players' safety, would be replaced by Guinea.

The tournament starts on January 13.

But Guinea Government spokesman Ibrahim Sylla said later on television here that the CAF had not officially notified Guinea of its decision and that there was not enough time to prepare for the competition.

Guinea, selected as replacement after coming the best third in the qualifying round, had been expected to play in Group C in Durban.

Relations between Nigeria and South Africa plummeted in November after nine minority rights activists, including writer Ken Saro Wiwa, were executed by Nigeria's military authorities.

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Saad Hawaji who has been MD of Horizon Jordan since 1990, will return to Kuwait as Managing Director. "Kuwait is a market I have serviced for almost twenty years. I'm looking forward to the next twenty-year challenge."

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Italy's Alberto Tomba celebrates his victory in the men's World Cup slalom, January 7, as he sits on the shoulders of second placed Austrian Mario Reiter (right) and Jure Kosir of Slovenia (Reuters photo)

## Tomba wins another classic

FLACHAU, Austria (AFP) — Alberto Tomba tortured his rivals in classic fashion yet again to triumph in the men's World Cup slalom here on Sunday.

Tomba's second-run charge saw him win in 1min 41.05sec, giving him his 48th

World Cup event victory and a third success the season. His time saw off Mario Reiter of Austria (1:41.25) and Jure Kosir of Slovenia (1:41.45).

It was yet another cruel slap in the face for the men trying to depose him.

As so often, the Italian playboy was only fourth fastest after the first leg but he stormed down the second run, even going airborne in the upper half of the course as he accelerated off a turn.

On Saturday Tomba had come back from sixth to clinch second in the giant slalom, a surprise result he hailed as good as a victory despite being beaten by the last man down the hill.

This time that role fell to Reiter, who had almost half a second on Tomba after the first run.

## Al Wihdat to host Kfar Kana next week

By Tareq Ayyoub  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — An Israeli Arab soccer team from Kfar Kana will arrive here Jan. 15 to play against the Al Wihdat in the first soccer game between clubs from Israel and Jordan, a spokesman for Al Wihdat said Sunday.

The spokesman, Rizq Abu Ghareeb, also said that during the four-day visit by the Israeli club, talks will be held between officials from the two sides on future cooperation and a possible visit by Al Wihdat to Israel.

"We are happy to host the club of Kfar Kana in its first visit to the Kingdom," said Mr. Abu Ghareeb. "We look upon developing our relations with Arab clubs in Israel," he added.

Our arms are open for our Arab brethren in Israel to come and play in Jordan. We believe that Jordanian fans will welcome and will support the visit by Kfar Kana team to the Kingdom," Mr. Abu

Ghareeb said in a telephone interview.

Last April Al Wihdat visited the Palestinian self-rule areas in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and played against three clubs from Gaza and Hebron. The team also visited the club of Kfar Kana, but no match was played between the two clubs.

Kfar Kana, which plays in the third division on the Israeli soccer league, includes among its players Arab and Israeli footballers. The club delegation is led by its chairman, Faisal Al Khateeb.

Spokesman of the Israeli embassy Shalom Trougeman welcomed this step by Al Wihdat and said that more matches between clubs from the two countries will take place in Amman and Tel Aviv when the two sides sign the cultural agreement, scheduled to be endorsed Jan. 18.

The match between the two clubs will be held at Al Hussein Youths City stadium. No exact date was fixed for the match.

## Asian Squash Championship opens today Pakistan aims to win eighth consecutive title

By Aleen Bannayan  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

Amman — Players and officials are all set for the start of the 8th Asian Squash Championship which opens at the Sports Palace Monday afternoon with 13 countries taking part.

The competition, held under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, will be held at the Kingdom's newest sports facility — Al Hassan Squash Centre.

The large number of competitors makes the championship one of the largest Asian gatherings of the sport headed by world champion and the competition's top seed Jansher Khan of Pakistan.

Five Arab countries are among the 13 teams taking part. The competing teams represent Bahrain, Hong Kong, India, South Korea, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Pakistan, Palestine, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Taiwan and Jordan.

Jordan will be playing in Group 3 alongside Malaysia and South Korea. The Kingdom's national team includes Hamed Saeed, Mohammad Saeed, Yazeed Adas, Wa'el Tabat, Qutaiba Taha and Yazan Abdul Rauf will be playing on an individual basis.

Team officials are hopeful Jordan will score a good result

although Group 3 is a tough one as it includes Malaysia — Asia's second ranked team.

Jordan will have to get second place the group to move to the second round. If Jordan beats a group winner in that round the team will play for 1-4th places otherwise they will play from 5-8th places.

Jordan's best result in the Asian championship was the fourth place finish in the 1988 championship which was held in Kuwait with 13 countries taking part. However in the last championship held in Malaysia in 1994 Jordan's ranking dropped to seventh (see championship record below).

Pakistan, the world champion for the past decade, is Asia's top ranked team followed by Malaysia, Hong Kong, India, Singapore, Kuwait and Jordan.

The competing men's teams have been divided into four groups:

Group 1  
Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bahrain

Group 2  
Hong Kong, Kuwait, Lebanon  
Group 3  
Malaysia, Jordan, South Korea  
Group 4  
India, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Palestine

The women's teams were divided into two groups:

Group 1  
Malaysia, India, Sri Lanka  
Group 2  
Hong Kong, Singapore, S. Korea, Lebanon

### Championship record

\* Pakistan 1981  
(13 countries — Jordan finished eighth)  
1st: Pakistan  
2nd: India  
3rd: Singapore

\* Jordan 1984  
(7 countries — Jordan finished fifth)

1st: Pakistan  
2nd: Singapore  
3rd: Malaysia

\* Malaysia 1986  
(12 countries — Jordan finished fifth)

1st: Pakistan  
2nd: Singapore  
3rd: India

\* Kuwait 1988  
(13 countries — Jordan finished fourth)

1st: Pakistan  
2nd: Singapore  
3rd: Malaysia

\* India 1990  
(11 countries — Jordan finished seventh)

1st: Pakistan  
2nd: Singapore  
3rd: India

\* Pakistan 1992  
(7 countries — Jordan did not take part)

1st: Pakistan  
2nd: Hong Kong  
3rd: Malaysia

\* Malaysia 1994  
(16 countries — Jordan finished seventh)

1st: Pakistan  
2nd: Malaysia  
3rd: Hong Kong

### Monday's schedule

All matches will be held at Al Hassan Squash Centre

9:30 a.m. — men's matches  
11:45 a.m. — women's matches  
2 p.m. — referees course  
4 p.m. — opening ceremony (Sports Palace)  
6 p.m. — men's matches

## Cantona saves United

LONDON (AP) — Manchester United needed an 80th-minute Eric Cantona equaliser to avoid FA Cup humiliation on Saturday, as they salvaged a 2-2 draw against first division Sunderland at Old Trafford.

Cup dreams slipped away for the two surviving non-league clubs, but the third round produced its usual diet of drama with United held, Sheffield Wednesday beaten by Charlton and Tottenham

drawing 1-1 with lowly Hereford.

With United bidding for a third successive FA Cup final appearance, Nicky Butt fired the Reds into a 13th-minute lead, only for the Roker men to hit back through Steve Agnew (61 minutes) and Craig Russell (64).

But Cantona made a vital contribution to an otherwise anonymous afternoon, the Frenchman powering home a header from a Lee Sharpe free kick.

"before that I couldn't see us getting back into it," said United manager Alex Ferguson. "I thought that Sunderland had the tiger by the tail and were not letting go."

Sheffield Wednesday slumped 2-0 at first division Charlton, where Kim Grant and Paul Mortimer, from the penalty spot, did the first-half damage for a home side who had to survive the last 36 minutes with 10 men after

having John Humphrey sent off.

Manager Al Curshley played down Charlton's achievement: "Is it such a big deal? I don't know! It was a game I expected us to win."

Spurs, meanwhile, took a 36th-minute lead at renowned giant killers Hereford through Ronny Rosenthal, but the third division underdogs came roaring back to revive memories of their 1972 defeat of Newcastle.

Hereford skipper Dean Smith missed a 60th-minute penalty, but they grabbed a deserved draw when John Brough headed the equaliser two minutes later.

Gravesend and Northfleet were beaten but far from disgraced at Aston Villa.

Aston Villa manager Brian Little applauded the non-league side for their performance: "They came out of the tie with a lot of pride. They worked hard, were lively and well-organised."

Ron Atkinson praised his

players' professionalism after 10-man Coventry came from behind for a 3-1 win in their tricky third-round tie at third division Plymouth.

Sheffield United's new manager Howard Kendall was delighted with his team's fourth consecutive draw since he took charge — a 1-1 at Arsenal.

Blackburn booked a replay

with a goalless draw at Ipswich while Wimbledon drew 1-1 at another first division club, Watford, where Oyvind Leonhardsen's opener for the Dons was equalised by Tommy Mooney.

Liverpool striker Ian Rush reflected on one of the best weeks of his life on Saturday and said: "If I win the lottery, I'll buy the club."

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( Time)  
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CONCORD "2"  
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\* ASSASSINS  
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## Egypt feels positive about resolving Red Sea islands dispute

CAIRO (Agencies) — Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa returned from a mediation mission to Yemen and Eritrea and said it was clear both sides wanted a peaceful settlement in their dispute over two Red Sea islands.

"There are some points which still need to be followed up... there are efforts to reach arbitration, with the suspension of all military operations and withdrawal from the disputed area," the government newspaper Al-Ahram quoted him as saying. "It is clear that both sides are trying to reach a peaceful solution to the crisis... they welcome the Egyptian role in bringing their positions closer, as well as the Ethiopian initiative," he added. Mr. Musa was speaking on Saturday night at a military airport

closed to most reporters.

Mr. Musa visited both Sanaa and Asmara in a one-day trip on Saturday with messages from Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to the Yemeni and Eritrean heads of state.

A diplomat in Sanaa said he was carrying new ideas and new proposals on how to solve the dispute which flared in December over the Hanish islands. Twelve people were killed in clashes there between Yemeni and Eritrean forces.

Yemen accused the Eritreans of seizing Greater Hanish, the larger of the two islands, in fierce fighting Dec. 18 despite a ceasefire agreed a day before.

Eritrea, which captured and later released 200 Yemeni soldiers, said it won control of the island Dec. 17.

Mr. Musa said Egypt would contact France over a French mediation offer and would stay in touch with Yemen and Eritrea.

Al-Ahram said that at a news conference in Asmara Mr. Musa said there was some rapprochement between the two sides. "I believe there is great hope for holding a mature dialogue," it quoted him as saying.

Meanwhile, the Arab League said France is to mediate in the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute.

"During a meeting on Sunday with the league's secretary general, Esmat Abdul Meguid, France's ambassador to Egypt, Patrick Lecercq, said his country intended to start working soon to try to settle the Yemeni-Eritrean conflict," a senior official at the body said.



ARAFAT IN DURA: A Palestinian youth leaps over a fence to get closer to Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) chairman Yasser Arafat who Sunday visited Dura village near Hebron (Reuters photo)

## Amir 'considered killing Rabin with phone'

TEL AVIV (R) — The confessed assassin of Yitzhak Rabin joked in court on Sunday that he considered murdering the prime minister with a cellular phone — the apparent means used to kill an Islamic militant bomber last week.

Lead prosecutor Pinna Guy was listing to the judges the means Yigal Amir had considered to kill the prime minister.

Suddenly, Mr. Amir interjected, with a broad smile: "My idea was to do it with a cellular phone."

On Friday Yigal Ayyash, nicknamed the "engineer," the alleged mastermind of a wave of Islamic suicide bombings against Israel, was killed in Gaza apparently by a booby-trapped cellular tele-

phone. Israel has done little to dampen speculation it had a hand in the killing of Mr. Ayyash.

Prosecutors have never mentioned a cellular telephone among the means they allege Mr. Amir considered to kill Mr. Rabin, which included blowing up the prime minister's home.

Mr. Amir has confessed to shooting Mr. Rabin Nov. 4 as he left a peace rally in Tel Aviv. He said he was opposed to Mr. Rabin's peace moves with Arabs.

He is being tried on a charge of premeditated murder. Sunday's court session dealt with conspiracy charges made jointly against him, his brother Hagai and their

friend Dror Adani.

Israel did not charge Hagai Amir and Mr. Adani for murder because prosecutors said the two did not know of Yigal Amir's specific plan to kill Mr. Rabin.

A court has ordered he be held until the end of those proceedings. Judge Ilan put off a decision on remanding Hagai Amir and Mr. Adani until Wednesday.

Mr. Amir, in a white shirt with a dark sweater draped over his shoulders and the skullcap of a religious Jew on his head, chatted throughout the proceedings with his brother and Mr. Adani. He mouthed words to his sister and reporters in the audience.

Mr. Guy quoted Mr. Amir

as telling police during interrogation: "I'm only sorry that there is now no one on the outside to finish the job."

Mr. Amir then blurted out: "I didn't say that. It's a lie."

That and other outbursts led Judge Menachem Ilan to eject the 25-year-old religious Jew from the courtroom.

On Dec. 19 Mr. Amir's trial on the premeditated murder charge was put off until Jan. 23.

Mr. Amir has yet to enter a plea. During previous hearings he openly confessed to murdering Mr. Rabin. A video made by an amateur at the Tel Aviv peace rally where Mr. Amir shot Mr. Rabin dead showed Mr. Amir firing at point blank range at Mr. Rabin's back.

## Mohammad Deif becomes Israel's 'number one enemy'

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Following the slaying of Palestinian bomber Yahya Ayyash, Israel's new public enemy number one is another Islamic militant, Mohammad Deif, Israeli press reports said Sunday.

The daily Haaretz said Israel's Shin Beth internal security agency, widely suspected of organising Mr. Ayyash's killing in the Gaza Strip on Friday, now has its sights set on Mr. Deif, like Mr. Ayyash a militant in the Hamas movement.

The newspaper, usually well informed on Israel's intelligence activities, quoted Shin Beth officials as saying

Mr. Deif "heads a terrorist network" based in the Gaza Strip and "is at least as dangerous" as Mr. Ayyash.

It said Mr. Deif was held responsible for the kidnapping and murder of three Israeli soldiers over the past two years. No further details were given.

Mr. Ayyash was killed in a village north of Gaza City when a booby-trapped portable telephone blew up in his face. No one claimed responsibility for the slaying but Israeli officials openly welcomed his death.

Mr. Ayyash, known as "the engineer" for his bomb-making skills, was held responsible for five anti-Israeli

suicide bombings which killed 45 people and wounded more than 340 between April 1994 and August 1995.

Shin Beth officials also told Haaretz the agency believed that three Islamic terrorist cells were still active in the West Bank and one in the Gaza Strip.

But it said its agents had in recent months been able to arrest several dozen members of Islamic Jihad, another radical Palestinian movement, preventing several anti-Israeli attacks.

Israeli public radio reported Sunday that Shin Beth had notably arrested Abdul Rahim Barbisi.

## Zeroual urges cabinet to prepare for polls

PARIS (R) — Algerian President Liamine Zeroual on Sunday told his new government to step up preparations for parliamentary and local elections, seen by the authorities as a way of helping end a bloody, four-year-old conflict with Muslim fundamentalists.

Mr. Zeroual, chairing the first cabinet meeting being held under new prime minister Ahmad Ouyahia since his appointment a week ago, gave no timetable for the elections.

Violence erupted in the North African country after the authorities in January 1992 scrapped Algeria's first multi-party general election since independence from France. Fundamentalists had taken a massive lead in the first round of the ballot.

A presidential statement, carried by Algeria's official news agency APs, quoted Mr. Zeroual as saying: "Our people have ... to choose

their representatives in the legislature's authority and at the local level. These objectives are irrevocable imperatives."

It added that Mr. Zeroual urged the government to deal a final blow in the fight against Muslim guerrillas through implementing a bold programme of reform and starting dialogue to speed up preparations for the elections.

"I seize this opportunity to invite the government to handle the required actions for organising the popular consultation..." he said.

The Algerian cabinet led by Mr. Ouyahia met to discuss the new government's programme.

Diploma 1 analysts say Mr. Ouyahia was appointed last month to implement promises made in last year's presidential elections to introduce economic reforms and more political freedom into the strife-torn country.

## Shbeilat's trial postponed

By Sa'eda Kilani

SPECIAL TO THE JORDAN TIMES AMMAN — The trial of opposition leader Leith Shbeilat, accused of slandering their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor, was adjourned until Wednesday because his defence team refused to show up.

Jawad Yunis, Mr. Shbeilat's lawyer, said he did not appear before the State Security Court on Sunday because he was not officially informed of the date of the trial.

"I was surprised to learn about the trial through London radio," Mr. Yunis told the Jordan Times. "I arrived at the office at 8:15 only to receive a fax (from the court) informing me that the trial is scheduled for today at 8:00."

Mr. Shbeilat is accused of slandering their Majesties and distributing statements that are considered offensive to the King and Queen and undermining the Kingdom's financial status and shaking confidence in the Jordanian dinar. The charges carry a maximum penalty of three

years. According to Mr. Yunis, several attempts were made to free Mr. Shbeilat on bail since his arrest on Dec. 9 but were turned down. He also claimed that the court refused to allow him to meet with his client in private.

Mr. Shbeilat will appear again before the State Security Court presided by Judge Mohammad Shara'ah on Wednesday. His lawyer will be present since "this time we were informed (through a letter) delivered by a court messenger."

The State Security Court was formed last month of three civil judges following a decision by the Council of Ministers. According to lawyer Ziad Khasawneh, this is the first time that the court is formed of civil judges.

According to the law, the Cabinet has the right to form the State Security Court of either civil or military judges. Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker announced last month that Mr. Shbeilat would be tried in court composed of civil judges only.

## S. Arabia: UAE and Iran have claim to islands

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia's Defence Minister Prince Sultan Sunday said both the United Arab Emirates and Iran had a right to claim disputed Gulf islands.

"We hope there won't be any friction between two neighbouring countries," he told reporters in Riyadh. "The UAE has the right to claim the islands and at the same time we cannot say Iran has no claim over them."

The UAE and Iran have been at loggerheads over Abu Musa and nearby Greater and Lesser Tunb islands that are near key shipping lanes at the mouth of the Gulf since 1992.

Gulf Arab states, including regional powerhouse Saudi Arabia, have traditionally been strong supporters of the UAE in the dispute.

Last month, Damascus Declaration states — Syria, Egypt and the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) — issued a statement backing the UAE's sovereignty over the islands and its demand to refer the row to the International Court of Justice in the Hague.

Iran's Vice-President Hassan Habibi Friday urged a mass gathering of Iranian residents on the strategically important Abu Musa island to defend every inch of their soil.

He was on a one-day visit to see development projects on Abu Musa which include an airport and a harbour.

Prince Sultan said Iran should agree to international arbitration to solve the dispute.

Tehran says its sovereignty over the islands is not negotiable, but has called for bilateral talks with the UAE to clear up any "misunderstandings".

## NATO says it is unable to guarantee free travel in Bosnia

TUZLA, Bosnia (R) — NATO troops enforcing peace in Bosnia lack the manpower to assure civilian free movement across ethnic front lines and will not get involved in local police work, their ground commander said Sunday.

Lieutenant-General Michael Walker defended NATO's security policy in Bosnia following the release of 16 Muslims abducted by separatist Serbs when they tried to leave Sarajevo on routes patrolled by alliance troops last week.

The mostly Muslim Bosnian government complained that NATO's Peace Implementation Force (IFOR) was derelict in its duty to ensure safe passage of civilians under the Dayton peace accord.

NATO commanders rejected the charge, insisting their task was separating warring factions — not law enforcement. But U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry said last week NATO was looking into ways of improving security for travellers.

Yet Walker, a Briton in charge of IFOR land forces under mission supreme commander U.S. Admiral Leighton Smith, warned NATO could not be in every possible trouble spot all the time.

"We do not have sufficient troops to guarantee free movement for everybody throughout Bosnia 24 hours a day," he told reporters during a visit to U.S. Army sector headquarters in Tuzla, northeastern Bosnia.

Serb forces had freed the 16 Muslims detained in the separatist suburb of Ilidza after strong warnings from the IFOR command, Walker suggested.

"We have a number of measures we can employ to ensure freedom of movement and you saw that at work in the release of the Ilidza detainees," he said. "So we do have mecha-

nisms, we will do what we can. We do care..."

"But we are not at liberty to bring military force to bear other than where we judge that (restrictions) being imposed demand it in the context of the Dayton agreement."

Walker said it put responsibility for ensuring free movement and law and order expressly in the hands of the factions' respective police, not IFOR.

"If (maintaining) law and order should require them to maintain a checkpoint, then they are perfectly free to do so. That does not mean they are allowed to stop US."

"But it's nothing to prevent them running their police in their country as would be the case anywhere in the world."

The British general's strict interpretation of IFOR's duty seemed to vary from the view of NATO's leading power, the United States, whose officials have called checkpoints a relic of war impeding a return to normal life in Bosnia.

All 16 Muslims were believed to have been seized at "wild" checkpoints set up by headline Serb militia bent on testing IFOR's mettle in the early days of its deployment.

IFOR got into a fix when it declared the main road from Sarajevo through Ilidza open, then declined to provide escorts for Muslims using the route, calling this a police task.

NATO sources said the alliance military was over-hasty to say free movement prevailed and then maintain a low profile, especially in an area notorious for the ill-treatment of U.N. personnel and non-Serb civilian travellers during the war.

Walker also said a spate of shootings at IFOR targets in the past few days was probably "mischievous fire" rather than the sort of ill-disciplined gunplay common during the new year period in the Balkans.

## Afghan faction imposes bearded dress code

PESHAWAR (AP) — Leaders from the rebel Afghan Taliban faction say unless men grow beards, they won't be allowed to work except as street sweepers, a newspaper reported Sunday.

Street cleaning in much of the Islamic world is considered among the lowliest of jobs. Taliban rebels, many of whom are former Muslim religious students, say clean shaven men are breaking with Islamic rituals. Pakistani English-language newspaper The News reported.

Since entering the Afghan civil war in late 1994, the Taliban has captured much of the southern half of the country.

Where they have assumed control, Taliban leaders have forced residents to live by a strict Islamic code of conduct.

## Journalists call for more press freedom in Arab countries

SANAA (AFP) — Journalists opened an unprecedented conference here on Sunday calling for more press freedom in Arab countries as a means to boost economic and social development.

"It is quite often in the Arab World that we count the most violations of press freedom," the press watchdog Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) said at the conference sponsored by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and Yemen, the first of its kind in an Arab country.

"At this stage, we must end the guardianship imposed on the press. The (Arab) people have become adults," said Mahfuz Al-Ansari, editor-in-chief of the Egyptian government daily Al-Jumhuriyah.

Meanwhile, the U.N. Assistant Secretary General for Information Samir Sanbar said: "Freedom of opinion is needed for social

progress, economic success, and political freedom."

"Freedom of expression helps one confront injustice and corruption" that hinder development, and "ensures the collective participation required for all social and economic progress," he said.

The Paris-based RSF distributed a report showing that 47 journalists were murdered in Arab countries in 1994 and 1995. At least 21 were imprisoned during the same period.

"Most of the journalists who were detained were thrown in prison following trials that were neither fair nor impartial, often held behind closed doors, without a defence worthy of the name," RSF said.

It singled out for blame Libya, Iraq, Syria, Mauritania and Tunisia.

At least a dozen journalists were reported missing in Algeria and Sudan. In Lebanon, Yemen, Jordan and the Palestinian

self-rule territories, the authorities arrest journalists "for several hours or weeks" to show them the limits of what they can report, RSF said.

Censorship is officially or unofficially applied in Arab Gulf countries, Libya, Sudan, Tunisia, Morocco and in the Palestinian territories, requiring journalists to stick to official information.

"Will the alibi of the war against Israel, which justified the absence of press freedom, be replaced by that of peace," RSF asked, referring to arrests of journalists opposed to the peace process in the Palestinian areas.

A state of emergency remains in force in several Arab countries because of the conflict with Israel and RSF said that Arab democracy is still a long way off "in spite of the hope raised by the peace process."

The conference on promoting an independent and pluralist Arab press is to last five days.

## COLUMN

### Okinawa accident involves U.S. marine

TOKYO (AFP) — A 36-year-old Japanese mother, and her two children died Sunday on the island of Okinawa, where anti-U.S. hostility has been growing in recent months, after a vehicle driven by a U.S. marine hit them, police said. Lori A. Padillar, a 20-year-old marine stationed in the southern island, was going shopping with a friend, when the vehicle mounted the sidewalk and hit the three, police said. The exact cause of the accident was under investigation. "The marine seems to have been driving at a high speed and lost control," a police spokesman said. Padillar was injured and sent to a U.S. military hospital. Anti-U.S. feeling has mounted in Okinawa since the September rape of a 12-year-old girl for which three U.S. servicemen are on trial.

### Pop star commits suicide in S. Korea

SEOUL (AFP) — Popular singer Kim Kwang-Sok was found hung in his home Saturday, the second apparent suicide of a pop singer in South Korea within two weeks, newspapers and television said Sunday. Kim, 32, a former member of the vocal group Tongmulwon (Zoo) popular among the middle-aged as well as the young, was found by his wife hanging by an electric cord from a ladder in his living room, the Korea Times said. The Times quoted police as speculating that the motive might have been his wife's opposition to his leaving for the United States for studies. Last week young pop idol Soh Chi-Won, was found dead of an apparent drug overdose.

### Impostor outwits New Delhi cops

NEW DELHI (AFP) — A man walked away with 385,000 rupees (\$12,800) from a police department here after posing as an officer collecting salaries, newspaper said Sunday. The man told employees of the New Delhi police's northeastern wing Friday that he was sub-inspector Harendra who wanted to collect the pay of men attached to the Nand Nagri police station, the India Express said. The employees handed him the money and signed for it. The audacious fraud was detected when men from the Nand Nagri police station came to demand the salaries.

### Policeman holding girl, aunt in bizarre hostage drama

MANILA (AFP) — A policeman was holding girl and her aunt near altar in front of terrified Roman Catholic worshippers in a bizarre Sunday morning hostage drama, the Philippine capital police and radio reported. Authorities said police officer Ferdinand Angel surprised churchgoers when he seized Melo Velasco, 11, who was sitting in the front row, during Divine Mercy Church a held her at gunpoint with his 38 service revolver. I grabbed Velasco's arm when she tried to get closer. He also demanded that his wife be with him but was not clear if she was a hostage. The hostages were being held near the altar police officers surrounded the church, and negotiations were under way. Was not immediately known why Mr. Angel went berserk, but live reports from the scene said he might be on drugs.